



नेहा & NEEL

ARTISTS
AT PLAY

40
LATINO
THEATER
CO.



40

LATINO
THEATER
CO.

**40 YEARS OF
BOLD STORIES,
UNBREAKABLE
COMMUNITY,
AND LEGACY.**



WELCOME!



For four decades, Latino Theater Company has proudly served the Los Angeles community, championing diverse voices and illuminating the rich, complex tapestry of the Latina/o/x experience in the United States. As we celebrate this milestone 40th Anniversary, we present a season that embodies our mission: a vibrant collection of stories reflecting where we've been, who we are, and the futures we dare to imagine — all under the unifying magic of live theatre.

This landmark season features world premieres from our Circle of Imaginistas playwrights' initiative, a powerful revival from our history through our Impact Initiative, and a celebrated encore from our 2024 Encuentro Festival, each illuminating our shared human experience.

We began our 40th anniversary season with the West Coast Premiere of Karen Zacarías' insightful *Just Like Us*, adapted from Colorado's former First Lady, Helen Thorpe's, best-selling non-fiction book. This timely drama followed four Latina high school seniors, best friends who navigate the rituals of prom and graduation while possessing college dreams, but two are undocumented. The play exposed how a piece of paper dictates opportunity, crafts identity, and challenges friendships, while laying bare the complexities of immigration in the U.S., asking what it truly means to belong

in the United States.

Next, we presented the wildly inventive World Premiere of ***The Last Play by Rickérby Hinds***. A Circle of Imaginistas playwrights' initiative commission, this meta-theatrical journey dived into the creative mind as playwright Rickérby Hinds put himself on stage, wrestling with writer's block, his Afro-Latino identity, hip hop aesthetics, and artistic legacy. Conjuring characters from his past works, the play poignantly deconstructed the relationship between creator and creation, asking profound questions about voice, representation, and the nature of storytelling itself.

Closing out our spring season was an encore production from 2024's Encuentro Festival—in association with Chicago's innovative Water People Theater, LTC presents Rebeca Alemán's haunting ***The Delicate Tears of the Waning Moon***. Based on true events in a turbulent Latin American country, this powerful drama followed Paulina, a human rights journalist recovering from amnesia after an assassination attempt. The play was a powerful meditation on the profound personal cost of reporting truth, the nature of grief, and the fragility of freedom in the face of corruption.

Over the summer we proudly presented a revival production of LTC's seminal work, ***August 29***, as part of our Impact Initiative, bringing theatre directly into partnership with our community, in collaboration with Los Angeles Community College students. This play revisits the life, work, and tragic murder of journalist Ruben Salazar during the 1970 Chicano Moratorium against the Vietnam War. Exploring the complexities of Chicano identity, the fight against police brutality, and the power of the press, *August 29* remains startlingly relevant, reminding us of the enduring power of community activism in the struggle for justice.

On Saturday, September 13, we celebrated ***Noche de Luz y Sombra***, the 40th Anniversary of the Latino Theater Company,

We laughed, we cried, we celebrated, and yes—we danced the night away. We came together with friends, familia, allies, supporters—our community. We witnessed the true power of theatre, as our company took the stage to share their history, their friendship, and their bond a la chicano-noir.

Our fall season opens the year's second Circle of Imaginistas World Premiere, ***The Little King of Norwalk*** by Israel López Reyes. With a satirical eye, López Reyes brings us a razor-sharp contemporary fable set in Southeastern Los Angeles. When Juan Perez, a normal guy grappling with his past and a recent DUI, is mistaken for a powerful political consultant, he's drawn into the corrupt underbelly of local politics. The play hilariously and poignantly explores themes of Chicano identity, the allure of power, family legacy, community belonging, and the difficult path to redemption.

Next is another World Premiere commissioned through our Circle of Imaginistas, Miranda González's exploration of the little-known underground railroad into Mexico, ***Mascógos***. A trilingual and non-linear drama, this thematically innovative play follows 18-year-old Jamari in 1864 Mexico and present-day Chicago's West Side, and asks profound questions about the meaning of freedom in the painful past and the imperfect present. Gonzalez's play illuminates the contributions and experience of Afro-Latinos to the rich and complicated tapestry of both the past and contemporary American life.

Next we present our third production with Artists at Play, among the most exciting companies to emerge in Los Angeles, and who are dedicated to illuminating the AAPI experience in the U.S., with the World Premiere of Ankita Raturi's delightfully touching **नेहा & Neel**. What starts as a meticulously planned college tour for Neha (नेहा) and her seventeen-year-old son Neel (नील) quickly derails into a chaotic and hilarious cross-country road trip across the

United States, exploring the intricate relationship of a mother and her son. The play navigates the conflicts and tenderness between an immigrant mother and her American-born child, the nuances of identity, and the bittersweet but inevitable process of a parent learning to let go while a child emerges into adulthood.

We close our 40th year with our annual production of ***La Virgen De Guadalupe, Dios Inantzin***. Adapted for the stage by Evelina Fernández from the mid-16th century text *The Nican Mopohua*, and featuring over 100 actors, singers and indigenous Aztec dancers as well as children and seniors from the community, ***La Virgen De Guadalupe, Dios Inantzin*** is the City of L.A.'s largest theatrical holiday production. Become transfixed by the story of Juan Diego, a simple peasant to whom the Virgin Mary appeared on four occasions in the mountains of Tepeyac near Mexico City in 1531, and his universal story of perseverance and hope.

From the pressures of youth to the weight of history, from the corridors of power to the intimate spaces of memory, our 40th anniversary season seeks to illuminate the complexities of the human experience. These are stories of pain and injustice, but also of profound resilience, unwavering hope, fierce love, and the unbreakable bonds of community. Thank you for joining us for this landmark 40th Anniversary season as we experience the vital power of theatre to connect us, challenge us, educate us, and celebrate the multifaceted human spirit.

Enjoy the show!



JOSÉ LUIS VALENZUELA
Artistic Director



**40 YEARS OF
BOLD STORIES,
UNBREAKABLE
COMMUNITY,
AND LEGACY.**



LET'S GET SOCIAL!
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**PIA
SHAH**



**ACHINTYA
PANDEY**



**PARVESH
CHEENA**



**RONAK
GANDHI**



**SETH
GUNAWARDENA**



**PRIYA
MOHANTY**

नेहा & NEEL

BY **ANKITA RATURI**

नेहा.....Pia Shah*
Neel.....Achintya Pandey
Arnav & Avatars.....Parvesh Cheena*

Understudies: Ronak Gandhi, Seth Gunawardena, Priya Mohanty
Understudies never substitute for a listed performance unless a specific announcement
is made at the time of the performance.

Scenic Design
LEAH RAMILLANO

Costume Design
ELENA FLORES

Lighting Design
SZU-YUN WANG

Sound Design
E.E BRADMAN

Properties Design
NAOMI KASAHARA

Production Stage Manager
LANAE WILKS*

Dramaturg
ARNAB BANERJI

Associate Director
KATIE BRADLEY

Asst. Stage Manager
BONNIE-LYNN MONTAÑO

Production Manager
MAY FEI

DIRECTED BY
LILY TUNG CRYSTAL

नेहा & Neel will be performed without an intermission

* Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States

नेहा & Neel was first produced as a World Premiere in Los Angeles by Artists at Play in co-production with Latino Theater Company at The Los Angeles Theatre Center in 2025.

नेहा & Neel received additional development with Artists at Play.

नेहा & Neel is supported in part by the Los Angeles New Play Project.



Pia (पीया) Shah* (नेहा) is an actor and writer whose work spans stage and screen. She starred opposite Alfred Molina in *The Father* at Pasadena Playhouse (LADCC Award, Best Ensemble) and created the role of Leela in *Orange* at South Coast Repertory. Pia has originated roles in new plays at Center Theatre Group, Geffen Playhouse, Ojai Playwrights Conference, and beyond. Her play *Tear!* was an O'Neill semifinalist, and her short film *The Shower* won Best Short at SAFFA. On screen: *Blue Boy*, *Krapopolis*, *Room 104*, *Good Trouble*, *Grey's Anatomy*, *Dirty John*. MFA: USC. BA: Johns Hopkins

Achintya (अचिंत्य) Pandey (Neel) is thrilled to be joining Artists at Play for the debut of नेहा & Neel. Originally from the Bay Area, he moved to Los Angeles to study acting at the UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television, where he was the lead in *Everybody* by Branden Jacob-Jenkins and seen in *The Successful Life of Three* and *Hamlet*. He would like to thank his amazing family and partner for being his pillars, and hopes his mom and dad see a little of their own journey in this amazing cast and story.

Parvesh (परवेश) Cheena* (Arnav & Avatars) is back performing with Artists at Play after their co-world premiere production of *Two Mile Hollow* by Leah Nanako Winkler, participating in 2019's Artists at Play ... at Play!, and reading the roles of "Krishnan" and "Guruji" in the special presentation of *Evil Eye* by Madhuri Shekar. He has been an associate and friend of AAP for some years now. Parv is also a board member of the Blank Theatre Company. Thank you for supporting live theatre in Southern California. "No one is free until everyone is free." Fannie Lou Hamer

Priya (प्रिया) Mohanty (u/s नेहा) is a multi-hyphenate artist. She's an actor, screenwriter, playwright, and classic

over-thinker. Priya came to America from India for her MBA at Duke. She left her corporate career behind for the high-risk, higher-reward world of acting and storytelling. Her notable credits include the world premiere of *Queen* at Victory Gardens in Chicago, for which she received a BroadwayWorld Nomination for Best Actress; *Next* on FOX; *Chicago Med* on NBC; and the award-winning short film *Prayer for Childless*. Priya wrote, produced, and acted in the pilot of her series *FOBia* that won numerous accolades.

Seth (सेत) Gunawardena (u/s Neel) is an LA-based actor with over nine years of experience. He has charmed audiences as VP in *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity*, and as Suresh in *Animals Out of Paper* at the Chautauqua Institution, directed by Lamar Perry, in 2022. He completed his B.A. in Theatre at the University of California, San Diego. During his time at UCSD, he had the honor of playing Neel in the Wagner New Play Festival. He is beyond excited and honored to be a part of this production.

Ronak (रौनक) Gandhi (u/s Arnav & Avatars) is a fun socks kind of guy who listens to jazz music, is a health and fitness bro, and in his free time, he goes salsa dancing and takes obnoxiously long walks.

CREATIVE TEAM

Ankita (अंकिता) Raturi (Playwright) (she/her) is a writer and teaching artist who grew up in capital cities, pediatric gastroenterology offices, and the bisexual closet. Her other plays include *Fifty Boxes of Earth*, *No One Plays Badminton in America*, and *The Elephant is Very Like*. She has developed plays at Theater Mu, Playwrights' Center, New York Theatre Workshop, Roundabout, Ma-Yi Theater Company, South Coast Repertory, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Playwrights Realm, Berkshire Theatre Group, Cygnet

Theatre, Artists at Play, The COOP, Atlantic Pacific Theatre, Theater Masters, Fresh Ground Pepper, Hypokrit Theatre Company, New York Shakespeare Exchange, Pete's Candy Store, Natyabharati, Wesleyan University. B.F.A. in Drama: NYU/Tisch. M.F.A. in Playwriting: UC San Diego. Kathak student: Maeri Dance.

Lily (ललि) Tung Crystal (*Director*) is an actor/singer, director, and the artistic director of East West Players. She has directed the world premieres of R.A. Shiomi's *Secret Warriors* (History Theatre), Jessica Huang and Jacinth Greywoode's musical *Blended* 和 (Harmony): *The Kim Loo Sisters* (Mu/History), Saymoukda Duangphouxay Vongsay's *The Kung Fu Zombies Saga* (Mu), and Leah Nanako Winkler's *Two Mile Hollow* (Ferocious Lotus). Other credits include: Lauren Yee's *Cambodian Rock Band* (Mu/Jungle); David Henry Hwang's *Chinglish* (Palo Alto Players), Susan Soon He Stanton's *Today Is My Birthday* (Mu); and Steven Karam's *The Humans* (Park Square Theatre), which won the Twin Cities Theater Bloggers' Favorite Play 2022. She is also a three-time Theatre Bay Area Award Finalist for Outstanding Direction. Up next, she'll be directing David Henry Hwang's brand-new version of *Flower Drum Song*, premiering at EWP in April 2026. lilytungcrystal.com; eastwestplayers.org

Leah (लीया) Ramillano (*Scenic Design*) is a Southern California-based designer who balances work as a CAD Associate at Mattel, Inc. and freelance scenic design. At Mattel, she collaborates with various teams for tradeshow, toy fairs, conventions, and live special events, among other areas of in-person activations. Alongside her corporate work, her most recent design credits include *The Tempest: An Immersive Experience* (Shakespeare Center LA/After Hours Theatre Company; LA Drama Critics Circle Scenic Design Nominee), *In The*

Heights (Center Rep), *The Comedy of Errors* and *Romeo & Juliet* (Great River Shakespeare Festival), *Swipe* (Playwrights' Arena/LA LGBT Center), and the world premiere of *God Will Do The Rest* (Artists At Play/Latino Theater Company; Stage Raw Scenic Design Award Recipient).

Elena (एलेना) Flores (*Costume Design*) (she/her) is a Los Angeles-based costume designer and maker for theatre, TV, and film. She is a proud union member of Costume Designers Guild 892 and Motion Picture Costumers 705, as well as an ensemble member of Echo Theatre Company and Rogue Artists Ensemble. Elena has been exhibited as an "Emerging Artist" representing the United States at Prague Quadrennial 2019 and is an Ovation Award nominee in Costume Design. Recent designs include *Our Dear Dead Drug Lord* (Center Theatre Group), *La Finta Giardiniera* (USC Thornton School of Music), *Carmen* (Music Academy of the West), *The Infinite Swell* (IAMA Theatre), *Righteous Thieves* (feature film), *1660 Vine* (feature film), and she worked as a special costumer on the recent Christmas feature film *Red One* featuring Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson and Chris Evans.

Szu-Yun (सयुिन) Wang (*Lighting Design*) is a lighting designer in theatre and architecture based in Los Angeles and Taiwan. She is the recipient of a 2022 BroadwayWorld Los Angeles Award in the category of Best Lighting Design of a Play or Musical. Her recent productions include *Kairos* and *On This Side of the World* with East West Players. She especially enjoys developing new works and hopes her designs activate the emotional layers in stories. She is thrilled to collaborate with Artists at Play and an amazing team of artists to bring नेहा & Neel to life. More at szuyunwang.com.

E.E.(एल्दन) Bradman (*Sound Design*) Artists at Play: नेहा & Neel. Regional:

Confederates, PlayMakers Rep; *Fences*, Trinity Rep; *Mindplay*, Arena Stage; *Black Cypress Bayou*, Geffen Playhouse; *Cinderella: A Pantomime*, University of Nevada – Las Vegas; *Murder on the Orient Express*, Pioneer Theatre Company; *Stew*, Pasadena Playhouse; *Twelfth Night*, Oregon Shakespeare Festival; *A Distinct Society*, TheatreWorks; *Lear*, Cal Shakes; resident sound designer 2021-2022, Oakland Theater Project. Education: BS in Journalism, Florida A&M University; MFA in Music & Sound Design for Visual Media, Academy of Arts University. Stop by and say hello at eltonsounds.com!

Naomi (नाओमी) Kasahara (*Properties Design*) is a prop designer and set designer who is based in Los Angeles. She is originally from Nagano, Japan. Her prop design work has been featured at Artists at Play, and set design work at East West Players, Theatre of NOTE, Chalk Rep, Long Beach Playhouse, The Vagrancy, Cypress College, Saddleback College, and also multiple youth/educational programs from elementary to high school level. She has an MFA in Scenic Design from Cal State University, Long Beach, and her working experience includes Theatre Pokoleniy in St. Petersburg, Russia.

Lanae (लने) Wilks* (*Production Stage Manager*) is currently an LA-based Stage Manager. Originally from Baltimore, Maryland, she completed her MFA at California Institute of the Arts. A lover of art in all shapes and forms, her recent stage management credits include: *The Piano Lesson* at A Noise Within; Geffen Writers Room at The Geffen Playhouse; IAMA New Works Festival, *Radical, or are you going to miss me?* at IAMA Theater Company; *The Body's Midnight* at Boston Court Pasadena; *BBC (Big Black Cockroach)* at REDCAT and The Ojai Playwrights Conference. She wants to thank Artists at Play, as well as her family and friends, for their continued support. Check out her

website
<https://lwstagemanager.my.canva.site/>.

Arnab (अरुणब) Banerji (*Dramaturg*) (he/him) is a Tovangaar-based theatre historian and dramaturg. Arnab researches South Asian and South Asian American theatre, translates plays from Bengali and Hindi into English, and serves directorial and authorial vision with dramaturgical and cultural input. Arnab is a published author, and his writing has appeared in several academic journals. Arnab can be reached at @arnabanerji (Instagram) and arnab.banerji@lmu.edu. Arnab is grateful to the artistic giants at AAP, the fabulous Lily Tung Crystal, and the brilliant Ankita Raturi for letting him contribute to this fabulous process!

Katie (केडी) Bradley (*Associate Director*) is an actor and director based in Minneapolis, Minnesota. After having assistant-directed shows at the Guthrie Theater and Theater Mu, she made her mainstage directorial debut in 2022 with Mu's production of *Man of God*. Next, she directed the world premiere of *Hells Canyon* by Keiko Green and, most recently, helmed the critically acclaimed productions of *Stop Kiss* and the world premiere of *Maybe You Could Love Me* by L.A.-based playwright Samah Meghjee, at Theater Mu. She also served as Mu's interim artistic director from July 2024 until spring 2025. As an actor, Katie has worked with several theater companies around the country, including the Guthrie Theater, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Indiana Repertory Theatre, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, and Pacific Conservatory Theatre.

Bonnie-Lynn (बोनाफासीया) Montaña (*Assistant Stage Manager*) Previous credits: ASM (*Crazy Talented Asians*, East West Players), 2nd ASM, Sub 1st ASM (*Pacific Overtures*, EWP), Production Assistant/Rails, Sub Deck-Manager

(*Cambodian Rock Band*, EWP). When not in rehearsal, you can find her at the Mushroom Kingdom at Universal Studios Hollywood, playing pretend, karaoke-ing, or drinking too much caffeine. Much love to her family in Hawai'i, her friends, and especially Cade for their support.

Julia (जूलीया) Cho (*Producing Artistic Leader*), born and raised in Los Angeles, is a proud founding member of Artists at Play. Through her work with AAP — which encompasses producing, acting, and casting — she has helped develop and produce numerous works created by and featuring theatre artists of color in LA and throughout the country. As an actor, Julia has worked extensively in TV, film, voiceover, and theatre. She has also been invited to direct new works by Stephanie Kyung Sun Walters as part of the LAUNCH PAD program and Amplify Reading Series at UC Santa Barbara. Julia is probably best known for playing “Charlotte Lu” in the Emmy Award-winning web series *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*. Other notable credits include recurring roles on TV shows such as *Scandal*, *Goliath* and *This Is Us*. You can also hear Julia’s voice English-dubbing various characters in Korean and other international content.

Stefanie (स्टेफ़नी) Lau (*Producing Artistic Leader*) is an arts administrator whose work over the last 25 years brings equity, diversity and inclusion to Los Angeles theatre. As a co-Founder and co-Producing Artistic Leader of Artists at Play, Stefanie produces mainstage shows, new play development programs, Theatre for Young Audience performances, fundraisers, and other special events. She is a Development Associate at the Latino Theater Company, and previously worked at Center Theatre Group, East West Players, Ford Amphitheater, and Cold Tofu Improv. A graduate of UCLA, Stefanie sits on the national board of the Consortium of Asian American Theatres and Artists,

steering committee of the new Theatre Commons Los Angeles service organization, and is a member of the Artistic Directors of Color Alliance — Greater Los Angeles and Theatre Producers of Southern California.

Marie-Reine (मरी-रेन) Velez (*Producing Artistic Leader*) is an arts leader working toward community care and intergenerational healing through creative strategy, active listening, and resource sharing. A performing arts producer since 2005, she is passionate about supporting new play development and premieres, and is forever grateful for the opportunity to do this work through Artists at Play. Additionally, Marie-Reine is the assistant director at USC Visions and Voices, a campus-wide program that provides free interdisciplinary arts and humanities experiences that expand perspectives and create a more just future. She is the board secretary for California Presenters, where she chairs committees for Professional Development and Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access. She is currently pursuing an M.S. in Arts Leadership at USC. IG: @mariezp

Nicholas (निकोलस) Pilapil (*Producing Member*) has been a member of Artists at Play since 2013. In 2024, Artists at Play and Latino Theater Company produced the world premiere of his play *God Will Do The Rest* in their fall season.

Katherine (कैथरनि) Chou (*Producing Member*) is a writer, director, and producer for theatre and film. Her work in theatre encompasses directing and dramaturgy with Artists at Play, IAMA, South Coast Rep, Boston Court Pasadena, A Noise Within, EST/LA, and the Denver Center for Performing Arts, among others. As a filmmaker, her work has screened at festivals internationally and received support from CAPE, Visual Communications’ Armed With a Camera

Fellowship, STARZ, and Women in Film. Previously, she worked in post-production on films at Warner Bros., 20th Century Studios, and HBO. A graduate of L'Institut d'Études Politiques de Paris, she has called many places home across North America, Europe, and Asia. She is currently developing new work as a member of Artists at Play's inaugural playwrights group, The Neighborhood Project.

Wardrobe Supervisor

Diana (डायना) Gomez

Action Choreographer

Tripp (ट्रिपि) Pickell

Key Art Designer

Nishita (निशित्ति) Doshi

Special Thanks

Bessie Lebeda
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नेहा & Neel Workshop Artists

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Seth Gunawardena
Sashank Kanchustambam
Sharayu Mahale
Jasmine Leung

Special thanks to the cast, crew, and creative team behind the UCSD production of नेहा & Neel in the 2023 Wagner New Play Festival.

“Thank you again to Seth and Sashank for saying yes before I'd even finished a first draft so that I could fully commit to writing this play in the first place.” — Ankita Raturi, playwright



Artists at Play is a Los Angeles-based theatre-producing collective dedicated to programming that explores the Asian American and Pacific Islander experience. Since 2011, we have presented plays that demonstrate the humanity and complexity of diverse AAPI communities while championing and uplifting AAPI theatre artists who give voice to our past, present and future.

Artists at Play's mainstage productions have achieved box office success and critical acclaim, including "Critics' Choice" by numerous news outlets and a GLAAD Media Award nomination. AAP's producing history includes Los Angeles premieres, West Coast premieres, and world premieres.

Through our New Play Development program, Artists at Play has provided resources and support to 27 playwrights in crafting new work, with a third of those plays going on to world premiere productions across the United States and Canada. Since 2022, we have commissioned 6 new plays, continuing to add new AAPI narratives to the canon of American theatre.

Since 2015, Artists at Play has presented free Theatre for Young Audiences performances as a way to encourage youth to build empathy and understanding between diverse people. These shows have been presented in partnership with the Los Angeles Public Library, Japanese American National Museum and USC Pacific Asia Museum.

Artists at Play has developed artistic partnerships with the Latino Theater Company, Chinese American Museum, and East West Players. They have been featured in American Theatre Magazine, The Los Angeles Times, LAist 89.3, Angry Asian Man and Hyphen Magazine, among others. AAP is a member of the national Consortium of Asian American Theaters and Artists, Artistic Directors of Color Alliance – Greater Los Angeles and Theatre Producers of Southern California.

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www.ArtistsAtPlay.org
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Thank you to the individuals who have contributed to Artists at Play in 2025. If you would like to make a tax-deductible donation to Artists at Play, please visit www.ArtistsAtPlay.org/support or email info@artistsatplay.org.

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"The Latino Theater Company is among America's great ensembles."

- American Theatre Magazine

The Latino Theater Company celebrates 40 years of commitment to creating exciting, thought-provoking theater for the LA community. Founded at the LATC in 1985 with Artistic Director José Luis Valenzuela, the company has significantly contributed to the advancement of U.S. Latino Theater. In 2006 the City of Los Angeles awarded LTC with a 20-year lease to operate the Los Angeles Theatre Center, which was extended in 2021 for another 25 years to 2056. As operators of The Los Angeles Theatre Center, the Latino Theater Company's mission is to provide a world-class arts center for those pursuing artistic excellence; a laboratory where both tradition and innovation are honored and honed; and a place where the convergence of people, cultures, and ideas contribute to the future. We are dedicated to contributing new stories to the American theater repertoire and increasing opportunities in theater for underserved communities. As the nation's largest theater company serving Latinx audiences, we produce work by local playwrights and highlight new voices within the Latinx, First Nation, Black, Asian American, Jewish American and LGBTQ+ communities. Located in Downtown Los Angeles, our world-class arts complex has 80,000 square feet of performance, office and gallery space.

As an organization dedicated to providing space for artists from many cultural backgrounds, we want to acknowledge that the building where The LATC is located, in which we gather to share stories, is on the unceded lands of the Gabrielino-Tongva and Kizh people. We pay our respect to the Gabrielino-Tongva, Kizh, and other Indigenous caretakers of these lands and waters; and to their elders who have lived here, who live here now, and who will live here in the future. We extend that respect to all Indigenous people who join us for programming at The Los Angeles Theatre Center.

CONTACT

Latino Theater Company at
The Los Angeles Theatre Center
514 S. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90013

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

213-489-0994
Monday - Friday, 9:00 am - 5:00 pm

Please visit latinotheaterco.org for hours, parking and more information.

BOX OFFICE

The Box Office window is open one hour before curtain time for same day sales and closes 30 minutes after. Tickets may be purchased 24/7 online via latinotheaterco.org/tickets

WARNING: The photographing or sound recording of any performance or the possession of any device for such photographing or sound recording inside this theater, without the written permission of the management, is prohibited by law. Violators may be punished by ejection any violations may render the offender liable for money damages.

ENHANCING YOUR EXPERIENCE:

As a courtesy to the artists and fellow patrons, we kindly request that you turn off cell phones, all electronic devices, and anything that may emit light before the performance begins. Please refrain from talking or making disruptive noises during the performance. Photography and the use of electronic recording devices are not permitted during the performances.

The Latino Theater Company is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

The Los Angeles Theatre Center is a facility of the City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department and is operated by the Latino Theater Company.



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Pyare Darshako:

Artists at Play द्वारा produced Ankita Raturi द्वारा likhit aur Lily Tung Crystal द्वारा nirdeshit natak, *नेहा & Neel* mein apka Hardik welcome. We are so glad that you have joined us for the world premiere of this amazing new American play here at the historic Los Angeles Theatre Center in partnership with the Latino Theater Company.

नेहा & Neel is a heartfelt comedy that resonated deeply with the Artists at Play team, every one of us the child of immigrants. Neha (नेहा) had such an idea of how to raise her son Neel (नील) in America. But he's 17 now, and during an accidental cross-country college tour, नेहा and Neel must confront the difference between who they are and who they want each other to be. How does every generation of hyphenated Americans negotiate their many cultures, recalibrating the meanings of familial history, authenticity, and cultural affinity? The hope is that this play will remind us, including those raising children of our own, that we articulate culture/s in a wide variety of ways and there is no wrong way to (re)connect with ourselves and our loved ones.

For Artists at Play, it has been a long journey with *नेहा & Neel* but an even longer one with our playwright. Ankita Raturi was the inaugural recipient of AAP's Emerging Playwright Commission, which led to the exciting new international multilingual play *No One Plays Badminton in America*. Showcasing the work of a writer we were so excited about early on, we are grateful to Ankita for entrusting us as collaborators for this beautiful work. AAP is honored to be supported by our amazing creative team as well as the staff at The LATC. And now, to finally be joined by you, our audience, we couldn't be more excited to share this world premiere.

Asian Pacific Islander Desi American (APIDA) communities have existed in and contributed to this country, yet we still find ourselves facing stereotypes, hate, and anti-immigrant rhetoric, perhaps because our communities haven't yet become part of our nation's larger cultural imagination. Artists at Play strives to make a small but significant intervention by amplifying and uplifting APIDA stories in Los Angeles theatre and beyond. To continue fulfilling our mission of presenting plays that demonstrate the humanity and complexity of diverse APIDA communities, we have YOU to thank.

We are grateful for your support of Artists at Play and this world premiere production of *नेहा & Neel*. धन्यवाद/ Dhanyavaad!

Apki,
Julia Cho, Stefanie Lau, Marie-Reine Velez
Producing Artistic Leaders
Artists at Play



Learn more!

नेहा & Neel is the story of an epic road trip shared by an unlikely duo: a South Asian American single mom (Neha) and her teenage son (Neel). Here are some pointers to better understand the world of the play:

Jugaad – a quintessential South Asian survival mechanism. The word literally translates to a resourceful, ingenious, and flexible approach to problem-solving using limited resources and improvisation. Neha starts pulling her Jugaad chops at various times during the play! Look for a scene at the airport!

Hybridity – a term originating in biology, hybridity carried negative connotations upon its initial adoption into the English language sometime in the 17th century. In its most recent, and arguably, the most influential usage, Homi K. Bhabha, the postcolonial theorist, argues that cultural identities are formed at the junction of multiple cultures, or the third space of enunciation as he calls it. Bhabha argues that recognizing the ambivalence of cultural identities dismantles the hierarchy of cultural purity and overcomes the exoticism of cultural diversity while recognizing the empowering hybridity within which cultural differences operate.

Third Culture Young People – a term coined by Ruth and John Useem in the 1950s to describe the children of Americans working and living abroad. The term's scope has expanded over the last seven decades, but the central tenets hold up to the additional scrutiny. Third Culture Young People are children who grow up between and with multiple cultures. They demonstrate distinct interpersonal behavior, work-norms, social codes, and communication. This creates a new group that neither fall into the host or home cultures but rather share characteristics with other Third Culture Individuals.

Road trips and South Asians – Open roads are one of the most American things, inviting adventure with its mystique, possibilities, and challenges. Road trips are a typical American rite of passage and South Asian Americans have been partaking in this great American tradition ever since they came here, sometimes by choice and sometimes because it was necessary. Read more about the South Asian American experience of road trips here: <https://roadtrips.saada.org/>.

Gemstones as colonial loot – Gemstones such as diamonds, rubies, and emeralds were often extracted under exploitative colonial systems and removed from their places of origin to adorn imperial crowns, museums, and private collections in Europe. Their displacement symbolizes both the material plunder and cultural domination of colonized regions, where objects of deep local significance were rebranded as imperial treasures. Today, debates around repatriation highlight how these gemstones remain contested symbols of colonial loot and unfinished histories of the empire.