



TV VETS LEAD A TEAM OF PLAYWRIGHTS FOR “DESERT IN,” A NEW STREAMING OPERA MINISERIES

BOSTON – Oct. 2, 2020 / rev. Mar. 22, 2021 – It’s not uncommon for television credits to include playwrights’ names. But in a new project commissioned for the Boston Lyric Opera’s streaming service operabox.tv, two established writer/producer/directors (whose credits include “The Wire,” “Jane the Virgin” and “Insecure”) lead a team of young playwrights to bring a TV-informed approach to opera for the first time.

The project, titled “desert in,” was created by Pulitzer Prize-winning composer **Ellen Reid** (she won for 2019’s opera, “p r i s m”), playwright/screenwriter **christopher oscar peña** (“Insecure,” “Jane the Virgin”) and theater/opera/film director **James Darrah** (who directed the “p r i s m” world premiere at LA Opera). “Desert in” is an eight-part operatic miniseries featuring a storyline and libretto created by a group of eight writers working now in a virtual Writers Room to finish the script.

Leading the team is:

- Lead writer **christopher oscar peña**, who wrote for the Golden Globe-nominated debut season of The CW’s “Jane the Virgin,” HBO’s “Insecure,” Starz’s “Sweetbitter” and Freeform’s “Motherland: Fort Salem.” He is developing an original series for Netflix; and
- Deputy lead writer/writers room manager **Joy Kecken** who wrote and directed for HBO’s “The Wire.” She was Supervising Producer on season two of Marvel’s “Cloak and Dagger.” She co-executive produces “Motherland: Fort Salem” and has projects optioned by Lifetime and BBC Scotland.

“Desert in” writers include:

- **A. Rey Pamatmat**, who has written for AMC’s “NOS4A2” and is currently developing a pilot for the channel. His play *Edith Can Shoot Things and Hit Them* began a

rolling world premiere at the Actors Theatre of Louisville's Humana Festival, earning numerous awards;

- Boston playwright/actor **Ryan J. Haddad** (*Hi, Are You Single?*) -- new to screenwriting but with acting credits in the Netflix series "The Politician" as well as appearances on Netflix's "Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt," and the CBS series "Bull" and "Madam Secretary";
- Boston playwright **Kristen Greenidge**, whose breakout *Milk Like Sugar* won an Obie Award, a Lucille Lortel Award nomination, and awards from Independent Reviewers of New England and the San Diego Theater Critics Circle;
- **Roxie Perkins**, a Sundance Playwright Fellow whose plays were semi-finalists for the O'Neill National Theatre Conference and the Princess Grace Award. Her work has been programmed at Kennedy Center, La MaMa NYC, PROTOTYPE and LA Opera festivals;
- **Jesse Sanchez**, a composer and playwright who recently had his original musical *SUEÑOS* in development at Arizona Theater Company Workshop in 2020, and the New York Theater Barn New Works Series in 2019; and
- Boston writer **Quentin Nguyen-duy**, a Boston University School of Theatre graduate, whose play *Amputees* was produced at the BU Fringe Festival, the Asian American Playwrights' Collective Cape Cod Festival, and ArtsEmerson.

"Desert in" is scheduled to premiere on Boston Lyric Opera's operabox.tv in June 2021.

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