



MEDIA RELEASE CONTACT: Becky Gould-Levine  
Marketing and Communications Manager  
beckygouldlevine@creativecauldron.org  
703-436-9948  
For Immediate Release

## ***Creative Cauldron Stage Announces 2026 “Bold New Voices” Festival: A Showcase of Underrepresented Playwrights and Composers***

**Falls Church, VA** – Creative Cauldron Stage is proud to announce the launch of its “**Bold New Voices**” Festival, running from **April 11th through May 9th, 2026**. The festival is sponsored by Diener and Associates, Certified Public Accountants. The festival was also funded by project grants from ArtsFairfax and the Arts and Humanities Council of Falls Church. This initiative, established in 2019, serves as a vital platform for women and playwrights and composers, with a dedicated focus on supporting women of color who are traditionally underrepresented in the theater industry.

The festival offers audiences a unique opportunity to participate in the artistic process. Attendees will experience professionally staged readings of new plays and musicals, providing feedback that will help the **Bold New Voices Selection Committee** choose the final offering for Creative Cauldron’s 2026-27 mainstage season.

“Our goal is to create a safe, inclusive space for development,” says Founding Artistic Director **Laura Connors Hull**, who leads the committee alongside board members **Carol Lee Campbell** and **Krista Grimmatt-Adams**. “We are interested in fostering premieres and giving new life to works written by women that benefit from further development. By shining a light on these talented women writers, we take a small step toward gender equality in our industry.”

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### **2026 FESTIVAL SCHEDULE**

All performances take place on Saturdays at **2:00 PM and 7:30 PM**.

- **April 11:** *The C Word* Written by Sarah Lina Sparks | Directed by Sally Imbriano
- **April 18:** *Live From My Dad’s Couch* Written by Gaelyn D. Smith | Directed by A. Lorraine Robinson
- **April 25:** *His Girl Friday* Book by Danielle Moore | Music & Lyrics by Zachary Sloan and Danielle Moore | Directed by Matt Conner
- **May 9:** *Policarpa: Apocalypse Sur Amerikka* Written by Diana Burbano | Directed by Elena Velasco

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### **ABOUT THE SELECTIONS AND WRITERS**

***The C Word*** Written by Sarah Lina Sparks | Directed by Sally Imbriano

*The C Word* follows the story of five girls waiting for a job interview to become associate curator at a museum. While waiting for the interview, they are unexpectedly trapped by the hysterical oracle (Hystoracle). In order to escape, they must choose someone to sacrifice as tribute to the C-monster.



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**Sarah Lina Sparks** (she/her) is a proud Filipina playwright and recent UCLA graduate based out of Southern California. Her writing is largely inspired by her Filipino heritage, women, and the unique experience of coming of age in the new millennium. Her plays have been produced internationally by the Los Angeles Theatre Initiative, Ghostlight Theater Ensemble, and Out of the Blue Theater Company. She has been recognized by the International Thespian Festival, the Jane Chambers Student Playwriting Competition, Third Culture Theater (Nexus Festival), and Southern California Youth Playwrights. Her work has been published by Concord Theatricals and Dramatics Magazine and she is currently working on an exciting new commission in partnership with UCLA Health and LA Women's Health.

***Live From My Dad's Couch*** Written by Gaelyn D. Smith | Directed by A. Lorraine Robinson

*Live from My Dad's Couch* is part stand-up comedy, part bad shower singing, coming together in a cabaret-style performance about the failure of the promises made to Gen-Z by those who came before us in front of a live studio audience (you). From the set (her father's living room) Gaelyn shares semi-autobiographical, very political, funny stories and observations of what it's like to become an adult when the world (seems) to be falling apart.

**Gaelyn D. Smith** is an actor, writer, director, teaching artist, and digital content creator born and raised in Washington, DC, whose work seeks to expand possibilities and add nuance to the representation of the Black experience. She received her BFA in Acting from Syracuse University, earning the Marcia Mohr Award for Excellence in Dramatic Acting. She also received her M.A. in Television, Radio, and Film from the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University, where she won the Gordon J. Alderman Award for Excellence in Television, Radio, and Film for her half-hour dramedy *Chasing Viral*. The script was a finalist for the One-Eyed Rabbit Black Screenwriter's Grant (2021) and a quarterfinalist in the Shore Scripts TV Pilot Contest (2021).

***His Girl Friday*** Book by Danielle Moore | Music & Lyrics by Zachary Sloan and Danielle Moore | Directed by Matt Conner

*His Girl Friday* is a new musical comedy based on the classic Cary Grant / Rosalind Russell film of the same name (named to AFI's list of the 100 Greatest American Comedies). The film came properly into the adaptable public domain in 2024 when its source material, *The Front Page*, also became public domain. Featuring a big band score, the piece is a love letter to screwball comedies and the importance of the fourth estate in combating corruption.

**Danielle E. Moore** (she/her) is a writer, composer, and producer. Danielle's work *Audrey: The New Musical*, was a Regional "Bold New Works" premiere at Creative Cauldron in 2023. She is a member of the Tony-honored BMI Lehman Engel Musical Theater Workshop, Her musical *Ink & Paint*, starring Sierra Boggess and Gizel Jiménez, and co-written with Marjorie Duffield (Netflix's *Over the Moon*), received a reading at Roundabout Theatre Company's Underground space in January 2026, and a workshop of the piece was recently produced by Roundabout Leader for NewWorks Jeanne Hagerty and former DreamWorks Oriental Chief Creative Officer and Oscar-nominated producer Peilin Chou as a selection of the inaugural Newport New Works Festival.



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***Policarpa: Apocalypse Sur Amerikka*** Written by Diana Burbano | Directed by Elena Velasco

In the near future, an inexplicable plague infests La Gran Colombia. Ingrid Bolivar--the brilliant, mad ex-wife of Colombia's leader--is the only one who knows that the plague is carried by young women of the streets, whom she adopts and uses as weapons against the government. Policarpa, a girl with magical gifts, is supposed to be Ingrid's secret apocalyptic weapon. But when Policarpa falls in love with a top government official, she resists becoming an instrument of destruction and instead seeks to become a savior through sacrifice.

*Policarpa* has been developed at The Drama League's Rough Draft series, Theatricum Botanicum Seedlings, Oregon Shakespeare Festival Black Swan Lab Latinx Play Project, and Milagro Theatre's Ingenio play reading series. It received an Honorable Mention for the Jane Chambers Playwriting Award.

It received an Honorable Mention, Association for Theatre in Higher Education's 2017 Jane Chambers Playwriting Award and was a semi-finalist for the Eugene O'Neill Playwrights Festival 2018 and a finalist for the Bay Area Playwrights Foundation Festival 2018.

**Diana Burbano** was named as part of the Los Angeles Times' "La Vanguardia" 2022. She is a Colombian immigrant, a playwright, an Equity actor, and a teaching artist. Diana's play *Ghosts of Bogotá* premiered at Alter Theatre in 2020 just before the pandemic shut down. *Ghosts* was produced at the Actors Theatre of Charlotte in 2022. *Sapience* opened at Moxie Theatre in San Diego in 2022. *Fabulous Monsters*, a Latinx Punk Rock play premiered at The Public Theatre of San Antonio, featuring the music of FEA in 2023.

She was in the Geffen's Writers Lab in 20-21 and has commissions with Center Theatre Group, Artists Repertory Theatre, Breath of Fire Latina Theatre Ensemble, HERO Theatre, and Livermore Shakespeare Festival. Residencies include Marfa Live Arts, Milagro Ingenio, Workshop Theatre Lab at Echo Theatre, and the Mercury Company for Artists Repertory.

Diana has been awarded the Advance Gender Equity in the Arts grant 2022, the Bay Area Rella Lossy Award, the Long Beach Arts Council Professional Artist Grant 2019, 2020, and was a 2021 Jane Chambers Awardee for excellence in Feminist Playwriting. She currently represents Southern California on the Dramatists Guild council.

**TICKET INFORMATION**

In alignment with Creative Cauldron's mission of accessibility, all tickets for the festival are FREE and can be reserved at [www.creativecauldron.org](http://www.creativecauldron.org).

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## **FACT SHEET**

### **About Creative Cauldron Stage**

Creative Cauldron Stage is an award-winning non-profit theater and educational arts organization whose innovative programs in the performing and visual arts embody collaboration, experimentation and community engagement. Creative Cauldron Stage was founded by Artistic Director Laura Connors Hull in 2002. In 2023 Creative Cauldron Stage launched a \$500,000 New Home-New Horizon capacity campaign to raise funds for a move into a new theater in the Broad and Washington project in Falls Church City in the Winter of 2025. After raising approximately \$725,000 over a two-year span, Creative Cauldron has been able to smoothly transition into its new home, closing out the 2024-2025 season. This new location at Broad and Washington will give Creative Cauldron Stage a permanent home for the next 30 years, making a cultural anchor to a comprehensively planned arts and entertainment district that can appeal to people of all ages, incomes, and cultures.

Programs are presented in part through grants from the Virginia Commission for the Arts, The National Endowment for the Arts, ArtsFairfax, the Arts and Humanities Council of the City of Falls Church, the Ross-Roberts Fund for the Arts, The Shubert Foundation, and the Robert W and Gladys S Meserve Charitable Trust. Generous corporate and individual sponsors also support Creative Cauldron's programs.

Creative Cauldron is located at 127 East Broad Street in Falls Church, Virginia.