RUSKIN GROUP
THEATRE CO.

WRITTEN BY MICHELLE KHOLOS BROOKS
DIRECTED BY CASEY STANGL
PREVIEWS BEGIN NOV 4TH

PROGRAM

KAPLAN STAGE · NOV 7 – DEC 20, 2026

RUSKIN GROUP THEATRE

presents the West Coast premiere of

Nacho Ate Spiderman

by Michelle Kholos Brooks

CAST

BRAD 1
Jamie Pierce*

BRAD 2
Matthew Scott Montgomery*

DEVORAH
Sharon Lawrence*

XANDER
Dann Florek*

*Member of Actors' Equity Association

CREATIVE TEAM

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR / FOUNDER / PRODUCER
John Ruskin

PRODUCING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR / PRODUCER
Michael Myers

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER
Stephanie Kerley Schwartz

PLAYWRIGHT
Michelle Kholos Brooks

DIRECTOR
Casey Stangl

PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER
Nicole Millar

SCENIC DESIGNER
Stephanie Kerley Schwartz

LIGHTING DESIGNER
Brandon Baruch

COSTUME DESIGNER
Hannah Owens-Bender

SOUND DESIGNER
Keith Stevenson

PROP MASTER
Megan Trapani

CASTING DIRECTOR
Victoria Hoffman

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
Ryan Wilson

SET BUILDERS
Ryan Wilson & Drew Wilson

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Mark Mendelson

GRAPHIC DESIGNER
Amelia Mulkey

SOCIAL MEDIA
Amy Ruskin

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER
Emma Sanchez

Something has gone terribly wrong.

In a sunny, progressive beach community where the lawns are manicured, the politics are enlightened, and the neighbors are very good people, something has gone terribly wrong. Spiderman, an award-winning, free-range rabbit, is missing. The prime suspect? Nacho, the shaggy rescue dog next door who has recently developed a troubling interest in what lies beyond the fence.

What begins as a neighborly conversation about pets, boundaries and one suspiciously large hole quickly spirals into accusations, whiskey, cashew cheese, and the uncomfortable realization that being a good neighbor is a lot easier when nobody is testing the fence.

> **A West Coast premiere about good intentions, bad behavior, and what happens when civilized people stop being quite so civilized.**

CAST

The Neighbors

DEVORAH	Sharon Lawrence*
XANDER	Dann Florek*
BRAD 1	Jamie Pierce*
BRAD 2	Matthew Scott Montgomery*

Sharon Lawrence*

A journalism graduate of UNC-Chapel Hill, Sharon has been prominently featured on stage and screen over the last 40 years. Her television work includes her multiple Emmy-nominated and SAG Award-winning run as Sylvia Costas Sipowitz on *NYPD Blue*, as well as featured roles on *Shameless*, *Queen Sugar*, *Dynasty*, *Desperate Housewives*, *Rizzoli & Isles*, *Law & Order: SVU*, *Grey's Anatomy* (4th Emmy nomination) and currently in *Joe Pickett* on Paramount+ and several of Hallmark's top-rated holiday programs.

Theatre audiences will recognize her stage work on Broadway (*Cabaret*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, Velma in *Chicago*), Off-Broadway in *Pen Pals*, *Tongue of a Bird*, *Love, Loss and What I Wore*, regionally in *Steel Magnolias*, *Parents in Chains*, and roles at all the major LA theaters, with two Ovation Award nominations and a win from the LA Drama Critics Circle. Next April, at The Wallis, she stars as famed Washington Post publisher Katharine Graham in Robin Gerber's multi-award-winning solo play, *The Shot*. Sharon was a 2013 Lunt-Fontanne Ten Chimneys Fellow. Her non-profit service includes former Chair of the Women in Film Foundation, current BoD of Heal The Bay, and Trustee of the Screen Actors Guild Foundation and IAMA Theatre Company. IG @sharonelawrence

XANDER

Dann Florek*

Dann was last seen in Ian McRae's *The Joy Wheel* at the Ruskin. Other West Coast credits include *White Linen* and *American Buffalo* at the Old Globe Theatre, and *Big River*, Randy Newman's *Maybe I'm Doing It Wrong*, and *A Mad World My Masters* at La Jolla Playhouse. New York credits include Jack O'Brien's Broadway production of *The Front Page*, *Strange Snow* at Manhattan Theatre Club, *Man in His Underwear* at Playwrights Horizons, *The Freak* at WPA, and *Chopin in Space* at Yale Rep.

Movies include *Hard Rain*, *The Flintstones*, *Angel Heart*, and the soon-to-be-released *Chili Finger*. Television viewers will recognize him from *L.A. Law*, *Hard Ball*, Tom Hanks' *From the Earth to the Moon*, *The Pitt*, and most notably for 18 years as Captain Donald Cragen in the *Law & Order* universe. He has also directed numerous productions.

Jamie Pierce*

Jamie was most recently seen playing twin brothers John and James Jeckyll in Terrence McNally's *Love! Valour! Compassion!* at the Dezart Playhouse, for which he received a Desert Theatre League Award nomination. Other credits include, Los Angeles: *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* (Celebration Theatre; Ovation Award nomination), *Carousel* (Musical Theatre West), *Dreamgirls* (5-Star Theatricals), *Urinetown* (Coeurage Theatre); New York: *The Music Man* (Helen Hayes Theatre), *Broadway Dances* (with Karen Ziemba); Regional: *Evita*, *Peter Pan*, *Phantom* (Pioneer Theatre).

TV/film: *The Family Business* (BET/Netflix), *The Con* (ABC), the 79th Annual Golden Globe Awards, and the title role in the award-winning independent film *Bill*. Next up, Jamie will be appearing as Jeffrey in Paul Rudnick's *Jeffrey* at The Bent Theatre. Love to AJ!

Matthew Scott Montgomery*

Theatre: *Foursome* (IAMA Theatre/Celebration Theatre), *Stage Kiss* (The Geffen Playhouse), Del Shores' *Yellow* (Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award recipient for Best Actor, Ovation Best Actor nominee). **Film/TV/Web:** *Sonny With a Chance*, *So Random!*, *Shake It Up!*, *Austin & Ally* (Disney), *Unidentified with Demi Lovato* (Peacock), Del Shores' *Southern Baptist Sissies* opposite Leslie Jordan, *Jane the Virgin* (CW), *White Famous* (Showtime), *SMOSH* (YouTube), *Betch* (Hulu).

He most recently starred in a special sold-out presentation of his play *Ghost Play* at the Renberg Theatre at the Los Angeles LGBT Center. His new feature, the dark comedy horror *Howdy, Neighbor!*, is in post-production, directed by Disney co-star Allisyn Snyder and starring himself, Debby Ryan, and Alyson Stoner. Proud IAMA Theatre Company member.

PLAYWRIGHT

Michelle Kholos Brooks

Michelle is an award-winning playwright with productions staged internationally. Awards and distinctions include the Susan Glaspell Award, multiple Stage Raw awards, and Best of Edinburgh Fringe for *H*tler's Tasters*, which is currently being developed as a streaming series by producer Brad Saunders and Peter Dinklage's company, Estuary. *Kalamazoo* won the Riva Shiner Comedy Award. *Room 1214* was a finalist for the Ashland New Plays Festival. *Hostage* was a finalist for the Woodward/Newman Drama Award, the Fratti-Newman Political Play Contest, and a Showcase Finalist for the National New Play Network. *Chair* received second place in the Firehouse Theatre Festival of New American Plays. *War Words* was recently inducted into the United States Library of Congress as a collection of the Veterans History Project.

Publications include Dramatists Play Service, Theatrical Rights Worldwide, Plays for New Audiences, Room Literary Magazine, The Daily Beast, and Zócalo Public Square. Brooks earned a B.A. from Emerson College and an M.F.A. in Fiction from Otis College of Art and Design. She is a Resident Artist at New Light Theater Project, a former Artist in Residence at New York Rep, and a current board member of ShPIeL-Performing Identity Theatre Project. Brooks is a member of the Dramatists Guild of America, the Playwrights' Center, Pacific Resident Theatre, and a Non-Resident Senior Fellow at the Atlantic Council, Scowcroft Center for Strategy and Security.

MichelleKholosBrooks.com

DIRECTOR

Casey Stangl

Casey is an award-winning director based in Los Angeles. Recent projects include *Bobby Robotowitz* at IAMA Theatre (NNPN Rolling World Premiere), *The Girl on the Train* at the Alley Theatre, SJ Hodges' *Already Here* at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival (world premiere), Audrey Cefaly's *Alabaster* at the Fountain Theatre (West Coast premiere) and John Ross Bowie's *Brushstroke* at the Odyssey Theatre (2024 Scenie Award for Best World Premiere).

Casey's work has been seen at theaters across the country including South Coast Repertory, Geffen Playhouse, American Conservatory Theater, Guthrie Theater, Everyman Theatre, Arizona Theatre Company, La Jolla Playhouse, Woolly Mammoth Theatre, Denver Center, Portland Stage and Cleveland Play House. Casey has developed work with numerous playwrights and directed at the O'Neill National Playwrights Conference, Humana Festival, Pacific Playwrights Festival, Playlabs, PlayPenn, In the Works-In the Woods Festival, and from 2015–22 was Associate Artistic Director for Ojai Playwrights Conference. Casey is a proud member of SDC, the national labor union for stage directors and choreographers.

Upcoming: Jennifer Maisel's *Provenance* in a world premiere co-production with Asolo Repertory Theatre and Palm Beach Dramaworks.

Stephanie Kerley Schwartz Scenic Design

Stephanie is delighted to be back with the Ruskin team after opening the new stage with her design for *Honour*. Previous shows include *Paradise, A Bluegrass Musical*, *A View From the Bridge* and *Death of a Salesman*. As Resident Designer for Rogue Machine she has designed many projects including *anthropology*, *Treefall*, *One Night in Miami*, *Heroes of the Fourth Turning* and many more. At Seattle Rep she designed the scenery for *The Skin of Our Teeth* directed by Dámaso Rodriguez. For Center Theatre Group/Mark Taper Forum she designed costumes for *The Lieutenant of Inishmore* and Randy Newman's *Harps and Angels*, and the set for *Good Grief* at the Kirk Douglas. Other theatres include A Noise Within, Laguna Playhouse, Ford's Theatre in Washington DC, Artists Repertory Theatre in Portland, Oregon, Pasadena Playhouse, the Geffen Playhouse, South Coast Repertory, East West Players, Boston Court Pasadena, the Odyssey, the Fountain, the Skylight, the Matrix Theatre and many others. Recipient of multiple awards and nominations, including the 2017 LADCC/Kinetic Award for Distinguished Achievement in Theatrical Design. kerleydesign.com

Keith Stevenson Sound Design

Keith is an actor, writer and sometimes sound designer. He is a longtime member of Pacific Resident Theatre and Rogue Machine Theatre. He recently designed sound for *Honour* and *Grangeville* at the Ruskin and *Out With a Bang* at PRT.

Hannah Owens-Bender Costume Design

Hannah is a Los Angeles–based costume designer whose work spans film, television, and music videos. Her credits include *Mr. Mercedes*, *The Institute*, and *Bad Man*, along with music videos for the Pixies. With a love for vintage fashion, unconventional characters, and storytelling through clothing, Hannah brings her cinematic eye to the stage with *Nacho Ate Spiderman*.

Brandon Baruch Lighting Design

Brandon is a Los Angeles–based designer specializing in theatre, opera, dance, and immersive entertainment. He recently made his West End debut with StarKid Productions' *The Guy Who Didn't Like Musicals* at the historic Apollo Theatre on London's Shaftesbury Avenue. Elsewhere, his design work has been seen at Center Theatre Group (Mark Taper Forum and Kirk Douglas Theatre), The Wallis, El Portal Theatre, REDCAT, The Ford Amphitheatre, Getty Villa, 5 Star Theatricals, Long Beach Opera, Opera Santa Barbara, Chicago Opera Theater, Apollo Theater Chicago, New York City Center, Jerry Orbach Theatre and across Southern California, regionally, and internationally. Brandon is excited to return to Ruskin Group Theatre for another production. brandonbaruch.com

Megan Trapani Props Master

Diven is over the moon to be joining the Ruskin team for the first time! Her previous projects include *Corktown '39*, *Adolescent Salvation*, *Fairview*, and *My Son the Playwright* with Rogue Machine; *Outside Mullingar* and *Kid Gloves* with The 6th Act; and *The Pillowman*, *California Suite*, and *Hedwig & The Angry Inch* with Season 10 Stage. As always, she'd like to thank Joey and Robyn, and additional thanks to her mom Beth for putting up with her long phone calls on the way to the theatre.

Victoria Hoffman Casting Director

Returning to the Ruskin after casting *The Fantasticks* and *Blue Kiss*! Resident CD at Rogue Machine Theatre. Recent projects include *A Case for the Existence of God*, *Fairview* and *Saint Megan*. Additional credits include CTG's 2026 LA Writers' Workshop Series; *O: A Rhapsody in Divorce* at Outside In; *Octopus's Garden* at Boston Court Pasadena; *Rorschach*, *Winter's Tale* and Roger Q. Mason's *Hide and Hide* at the Skylight Theatre; *Kiss of the Spider Woman* and *Othello* at A Noise Within. Film projects include the AFI thesis films *Zenaida* and *Fishmonger* (College Television Awards nominee, CAA Moebius and Slamdance 2025). Currently Manager of Casting at the AFI Conservatory. First recipient of the LADCC Special Recognition Award for her Career Achievement in Casting for Los Angeles Theatre. victoriahoffman.com · @VicHoffmanLA

Nicole Millar Production Stage Manager

Nicole graduated from the Meisner Technique Two-Year Program at The Ruskin School of Acting in 2005 and continues to hone her craft in acting through the Master Graduate Class. Her other training includes James Kemp's teachings with Yat Malmgren (LAMDA, 2019), UCB LA's improv (2015), Paul Sand's Second City improv (2014), and Commedia dell'arte with Danny Passer (2004). She graduated with a Merit Diploma in Performing Arts & Media in 1991 from Hammersmith & West London College, England. She moved to the United States to pursue her acting career, which now includes work in stage production and over fifteen years with Ruskin Group Theatre.

PRODUCTION CREDITS AT RUSKIN GROUP THEATRE · WORLD PREMIERES

Bad Habits by Steve Mazur, dir. Mike Reilly; *The Joy Wheel* by Ian McRae, dir. Jason Alexander; *The Alamo* by Ian McRae, dir. Kent Thompson; *The Rainbow Bridge* by Ron Nelson, dir. Michael Myers; *The Gun* by Justin Yoffe, dir. Dave Florek; *It's Time* by Paul Linke, dir. Edward Edwards; *Sneaky Ole Time* by Steve Mazur, lyrics by Paul Overstreet, dir. Mike Myers; *The Face in the Reeds* by Robin Russin, dir. Sarah Figoten Wilson; *Talhotblonde* by Kathrine Bates, dir. Beverly Olevin; *Paradise, A Bluegrass Musical* by Bill Robertson, Tom Sage, music by Cliff Wagner, dir. Dan Bonnell; *Sideways, The Play* (AD) by Rex Pickett, dir. Amelia Mulkey Anderson; *The Tragedy of the Commons* by Stephen Metcalf, dir. Dave Florek; *Come Sundown* by Tony Cronin, dir. Karen Landry Mulkey.

US PREMIERE
A Gambler's Guide to Dying by Gary McNair, dir. Paul Linke.

REVIVALS
Honour by Joanna Murray-Smith, dir. Max Mayer; *The Fantasticks*, book & lyrics by Tom Jones, music by Harvey L. Schmidt, dir. Elina de Santos; *The Substance of Fire* by Jon Robin Baitz, dir. Mike Reilly; *A View From the Bridge* by Arthur Miller, dir. Mike Reilly; *Picasso at the Lapin Agile* by Steve Martin, dir. Amelia Mulkey Anderson; *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* by Todd Kreidler, dir. Lita Gaithers Owens; *Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller, dir. Mike Reilly; *Paradise* (2018), which then moved to the Austin Playhouse (2019), dir. Michael Myers; *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry, dir. Lita Gaithers Owens; *El Grande de Coca-Cola* by Alan Shearman & Ron House, dir. Alan Shearman.

WEST COAST PREMIERES
Green Eyes by Tennessee Williams, dir. Edward Edwards; *The Housing Room* by Conrad Bromberg, dir. Edward Edwards; *Leaving Home* by David French, dir. Barbara Tarbuck; *The Lonesome West* by Martin McDonagh, dir. Mike Reilly; *Grangeville* by Samuel D. Hunter, dir. John Flynn.

Emma Sanchez Assistant Stage Manager

Emma is a Los Angeles native who began her career as an actor, completed a two-year Meisner technique program at The Ruskin School of Acting, and continued at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. She previously served as ASM for the Ruskin Group Theatre production of Arthur Miller's *A View From the Bridge*.

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR / PRODUCER

John Ruskin

After graduating from the University of Colorado in Boulder, John continued his studies at the Yale School of Drama and the British American Drama Academy in Oxford, England. John then attended the Neighborhood Playhouse School of the Theatre and studied with Sanford Meisner and Richard Pinter. John then joined the acting faculty of the Neighborhood Playhouse at the request of Sanford Meisner and became his apprentice. Years later, John moved to Los Angeles, where he founded his school of acting to continue to teach Meisner's work.

John founded the Ruskin Group Theatre Company with the goal of developing and producing great original works and powerful revivals, and to support and encourage a creative artistic community. RGT is proud to provide outreach programs to children in need with the Healing Through the Arts program. We have taken our actors into Mattel Children's Hospital UCLA to work with and entertain the children. Past programs involved working with at-risk youth, foster children, people in prison, and the elderly.

John wants to thank everyone who volunteers, comes to support this theatre, and keeps the dream of small theatre alive. John is honored to work each day with every one of the amazing artists at the school and theatre. He is most grateful to his wife Amy and their sons Bodhi & Cooper for their constant love and support.

PRODUCING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Michael R. Myers

Michael has produced more than 80 theatrical projects at Ruskin Group Theatre since 2002, helping establish the company as a vital part of the Los Angeles theatre community. Among his producing credits is the world premiere of Rex Pickett's *Sideways the Play*, which went on to productions at La Jolla Playhouse and beyond. He also directed and developed the world premiere of *Sneaky Ole Time: The Music of Paul Overstreet*, with other world premieres including *Rainbow Bridge* and *Digging Up Dad*.

Beyond the stage, Myers has been a longtime advocate for the arts in Santa Monica, serving 12 years on the Santa Monica Arts Commission, including 10 years as Chair. In 2026, he spearheaded a $1.5 million capital campaign and oversaw the development and build-out of Ruskin Group Theatre's new Performing Arts Center at Santa Monica Airport, creating a new home for theatre, music, education, and the arts. He has also taught the Meisner technique at the Ruskin School of Acting since 2003, working with generations of actors.

Of all the things 2026 brought, including a new theatre, the highlight was marrying his wife, Sophie Owens-Bender. Some things are bigger than opening night.

Our Team

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR / FOUNDER
John Ruskin

PRODUCING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
Michael Myers

PRODUCTION MANAGER / ASSOCIATE PRODUCER
Nicole Millar

PUBLICITY
Judith Borne

PATRON MANAGEMENT / PRODUCTION
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Samantha Reynolds

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