LA STAGE DAY: 2017
Hosted by Cal State LA

Saturday, May 6, 2017
#LASStageDay

10:30 AM – Noon: Opening Event
A greeting from LA STAGE Alliance’s Executive Director, Steven Leigh Morris, keynote speaker, Jose Luis Valenzuela, and panel:

**Be Heard: Injustice, and the Arts** (Moderated by Steven Leigh Morris)
Do the words of Samuel Goldwyn still hold: “If I want a message, I’ll send a telegram.”

Panelists: Charles Duncombe, Jr. (City Garage), Sofia Klatzer (Arts for LA), and John Malpede (L.A. Poverty Department), and Linda Yudin (Viver Brasil).

This panel will explore the shifting relationship between art and politics in 2017. Or is it shifting? There’s a long, historic thread of politics in theater. With the arrival of the latest election cycle, what if anything has changed, and how? What are the most effective balances to strike? Overt advocacy? Satire? Gentle allegories? Is it possible to win the hearts and minds of the opposition, or is it most prudent, in these times, to preach to the converted?

**SPEAKER BIOS**

- **Steven Leigh Morris** is a playwright, journalist, novelist, and the founder of the community-funded digital arts venture Stage Raw. He chaired the Jury for the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 2012, and served on that Jury in 2011. He received the Critic of the Year prize for his print reviews by the National Entertainment Journalism Awards in 2011, for his writings at L.A. Weekly. His theater features have also been published in The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times, American Theatre Magazine, Back Stage, World’s Fair Magazine in San Francisco, and DRAMA Magazine in London. His play Beachwood Drive was produced in Los Angeles and off-Broadway, and is published by Samuel French, Inc. and in Smith & Kraus’ anthology of Best New American Plays. Morris’ first novel Fowl Play — Padaro Press (Los Angeles) and Open Road Media (New York) — is a political allegory that combines his dual passions for theater and barnyard poultry. It received the 2016 Gold Prize for the Human Relations Indie Book Awards.

- **Jose Luis Valenzuela** (Artistic Director, Latino Theater Company (LTC)/Los Angeles Theatre Center (LATC); Distinguished Professor and Head of the MFA Directing program at UCLA’s School of Theater, Film & Television) is an award-winning theater and film director and a tenured professor at the UCLA. For more than 30 years, Valenzuela has directed critically acclaimed productions at major regional theaters including the Los Angeles Theatre Center and the Mark Taper Forum. His international directing credits include Henrik Ibsen’s Peer Gynt at the Norland Theatre in Norway and Manuel Puig’s Kiss of the Spider Woman at the National Theatre of Norway. Most recently he directed Destiny of Desire at Arena Stage in Washington D.C., South Coast Repertory in Orange County and the Goodman Theatre in Chicago. He is currently producing the Latinx theater festival, Encuentro de las Americas at the LATC for the fall of 2017. Visit www.thelatc.org for more information.

- **Charles Duncombe, Jr.** is a writer, director and designer. He began his partnership with Frédérique Michel in 1985, and he has designed all of her work since then. He has received
many nominations and awards from Dramalogue, The LA Weekly, and Stage Raw, including Lighting Design, Production Design, Translation, and Best Adaption. His play Patriot Act won the Fratti/Newman Award for Political Playwriting in 2005. At the 2009 LA Weekly Theater Awards, he received (along with Frédérique Michel) the “Queen of the Angels Award” for “decades of directing and producing scintillating, politically charged theater that challenges audiences to reconsider their assumptions about the nature of politics and the nature of theater itself.” In 2011 he and Michel received the Los Angeles Drama Critic’s Circle Award for “Sustained Excellence in theatre.

- **Sofia Klatzer** is the Executive Director of Arts for LA, a regional advocacy organization dedicated to promoting arts and culture across government, education, business, and community life. Under her leadership, the ACTIVATE advocacy leadership training program more than doubled in size now representing 226 leaders; created a new mobile website connecting Arts for LA’s 60,000 members with local officials; surveyed over 350 candidates across 60 local elections in November 2016; and launched a campaign to register arts and cultural organizations to become polling stations. She has over 16 years experience advocating for and implementing arts policies, arts education, and grant making. Sofia currently serves on the boards of California Arts Advocates and Californians for the Arts, and serves on both the California Alliance for Arts Education’s Policy Council, and the Arts for Incarcerated Youth Network Advisory Council. Sofia received her B.M. in Electronic Music Composition from Oberlin Conservatory and her M.A. in Arts Administration from Goucher College.

- **John Malpede** directs, performs, and engineers multi-event projects that have theatrical, installation, public art, and education components. In 1985, he founded the Los Angeles Poverty Department (LAPD), a performance group of homeless and formerly homeless people who make art, live, and work on Skid Row. In 2015 LAPD founded the Skid Row History Museum & Archive (250 S. Broadway, LA 90012). LAPD has produced projects working with communities throughout the U.S., and in the UK, France, The Netherlands, Belgium, and Bolivia. Malpede’s 2004 work RFK in EKY re-created Robert Kennedy’s 1968 “war on poverty” tour in the course of a four-day, 200-mile series of events focused on historic and current social policy issues. As a 2008 fellow at MIT’s Center for Advanced Visual Studies, Malpede developed Bright Futures in response to the financial crisis. In 2013, he was one of twenty national recipients of the Doris Duke Performing Artist Award.

- **Linda Yudin** (Viver Brasil), named a mover and a shaker by the LA Times, earned her MA in Dance (Ethnology) from UCLA in 1988, and has devoted more than 30 years to researching, performing and teaching Afro-Brazilian dance. Her work is embodied in Viver Brasil’s 21st century expression of Afro-Brazilian dance theater; the company’s community engagement program, Samba in the Streets: Rhythms of Race, Social Justice and Celebration which recently received a Dance/USA Engaging Dance Audience grant with support from the Doris Duke Foundation; the signature cultural exchange program between Los Angeles and Salvador, Bahia, Dancing at the Source; and collaboration with Brazilian choreographers and mentorship of VB members as emerging artistic contributors. Yudin has received support from the Durfee Foundation; a Cultural Exchange International grant from the City of LA, Department of Cultural Affairs and Sacatar Foundation; and the excellence in teaching award from the Dance Resource Center. Yudin has directed eleven premiere works, guided national and international tours with Viver Brasil, and has created a living artistic bridge between her LA and Salvador, Bahia. Most recently, she directed VB’s bloco afro spectacle at the Hollywood Bowl, the premiere of Revealed at the Music Center’s Moves After Dark and the artistic vision for Viver Brasil’s participation in Viva Navidad Street Party at Disney California Adventure. Yudin taught at Santa Monica College from 1999-2014 and is currently a lecturer in the UCLA WAC/Dance Department.