



MARIN  
THEATRE  
COMPANY

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Friday, June 7th, 2019

**MARIN THEATRE COMPANY ANNOUNCES  
PHILANA OMOROTIONMWAN AS  
2018 DAVID CALICCHIO EMERGING AMERICAN PLAYWRIGHT PRIZE WINNER  
AND JEN SILVERMAN AS  
2018 SKY COOPER NEW AMERICAN PLAY PRIZE WINNER**

MILL VALLEY, CA—[Marin Theatre Company](#) is proud to announce **Philana Omorotionmwan** as the 2018 David Calicchio Emerging American Playwright Prize winner for her play, ***Before Evening Comes***—and **Jen Silverman** as the 2018 Sky Cooper New American Play Prize winner for her play ***Wink***, which will close out MTC's 2018/19 mainstage season this June! Now in their twelfth year, MTC's [two new play prizes](#) continue to celebrate the work of the American playwright and encourage the creation of bold, powerful new voices and plays for the American stage.

Norton J. “Sky” Cooper established the **David Calicchio Emerging American Playwright Prize** award at Marin Theatre Company in 2007 in honor of Calicchio’s lifelong career as a playwright, and in support of Marin Theatre Company’s commitment to the discovery and development of emerging American playwrights. The Calicchio Prize is awarded annually to a professionally unproduced playwright for a new work that shows outstanding promise and a distinctive new voice for the American theatre. As the Calicchio Prize winner Philana Omorotionmwan will receive a \$2,500 cash award, a professional developmental workshop at Marin Theatre Company for ***Before Evening Comes***, and round-trip travel and accommodations during her stay. The workshop will culminate in an invited or public staged reading at Marin Theatre Company.

**Philana Omorotionmwan on receiving the 2018  
David Calicchio Emerging American Playwright Prize:**

*“To have the work recognized by MTC is an honor for which I am deeply grateful. The first piece of it that I wrote was inspired by my time living in the Bay, so I'm excited to bring the play back there and look forward to working with MTC's artistic team.”*

**Philana Omorotionmwan’s *Before Evening Comes***

With his 13th birthday around the corner, Totome is excited to meet “the butcher” and finally become a man. His mother, however, hopes to keep him whole for just a little while longer.

Set in a dystopian future, ***Before Evening Comes*** explores what becomes of black boys, men, and women in an America rooted in the founding myths that the black male body is either a commodity or a threat.

### More About Philana Omorotionmwan

**Philana Imade Omorotionmwan** (o-more-o-tune-wha) is writing to save her body and spirit from a world that seems hell-bent on destroying them. She is currently based in Minneapolis, MN as a 2018-19 Jerome Fellow at the Playwrights' Center. Her plays include *Before Evening Comes*, *The Defiance of Dandelions*, *Fireflies*, and *Strong Face, or Misogynoir*. Her work has been developed and/or presented at the Bay Area Playwrights Festival, Br!nk New Works Festival, La MaMa Experiments Series, and Athena Project Festival. She has been a semifinalist for the Relentless Award, P73 Fellowship, and Many Voices Fellowship, as well as a two-time Heideman finalist, and a finalist for the Princess Grace Playwriting Fellowship, the Theatre503 Award, and the Playwrights Realm's Scratchpad Series. Her short plays have been produced by Ensemble Studio Theatre, Pillsbury House + Theatre, Manhattan Theatre Source, Stay Awake! Theatre, Little Black Dress Ink, 20% Theatre Company Chicago, and Ohlone College. Her poems have appeared in *New Delta Review* and *African American Review*. Philana earned a BA in English at Stanford University, where she began writing plays under the mentorship of Cherríe Moraga and also dabbled in spoken word. Philana completed an MFA in Playwriting in May 2018. She is at work on a television pilot about her experiences as a teacher in public charter schools. She is a member of the Dramatists Guild.

Established by Norton J. "Sky" Cooper in 2007, **The Sky Cooper Prize** is awarded annually to either an established or emerging playwright for an outstanding new work. As the Sky Cooper winner Jen Silverman will receive a \$10,000 cash award, a developmental workshop, and MTC will feature the World Premiere production of ***Wink*** this June, closing out its 2018/19 season.

### Jen Silverman on receiving the 2018 Sky Cooper New American Play Prize:

*"I couldn't be more grateful for the generous support *Wink* has received, as it comes to life at Marin Theatre Company. From the beginning, MTC embraced this play - and it's not often that a theatre offers such a warm welcome to a dark absurdist comedy about a skinned cat. (No cats were skinned in the making of this play.)"*

### Jen Silverman's *Wink*

Sofie is an unhappy housewife. Gregor is her breadwinning husband. Dr. Frans is their strange psychiatrist. *Wink* is the cat. And *Wink* has just gone missing. Secret desires, domestic anarchy, and feline vengeance at any cost make ***Wink*** an absurd, dark comedy about the thin, thin line between savagery and civilization.

## More About Jen Silverman

**Jen Silverman's** theatre work includes: *The Roommate* (Humana Festival, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Steppenwolf, South Coast Rep, among others); *Collective Rage: A Play In 5 Betties* (Woolly Mammoth, Southwark Playhouse in London, MCC Theatre, *NYT* Critic's Pick); *The Moors* (Yale Rep, The Playwrights Realm, Red Stitch in Melbourne, Seymour Center in Sydney); *Dangerous House* (Williamstown Theatre Festival); *Witch* (Writers Theatre, upcoming at The Geffen), and *Wink* (Marin Theatre Company). Jen is a member of New Dramatists, an affiliated artist with The Playwrights' Center, New Georges, and SPACE on Ryder Farm, and has developed work with the O'Neill, The Ground Floor Residency at Berkeley Rep, and the Royal Court in London, among other places. She's a two-time MacDowell fellow, recipient of a New York Foundation for the Arts grant, a Lower Manhattan Cultural Council Fellowship, the Yale Drama Series Award, the Helen Merrill Award, and a Lilly Award. She was the 2016-2017 Playwrights of New York (PoNY) Fellow at the Lark. Random House recently published her first book, *The Island Dwellers*, a collection of interlinked stories; her first novel is forthcoming with them. Jen also writes for TV and film, most recently on Netflix's *Tales of the City*. Education: Brown, Iowa Playwrights Workshop, Juilliard. More info: [www.jensilverman.com](http://www.jensilverman.com)

### ABOUT MTC

**Marin Theatre Company** is the Bay Area's premier mid-sized theatre and the leading professional theatre in the North Bay. We produce a six-show season focused on new American plays. We are committed to the development and production of new plays, with a comprehensive New Play Program that includes productions of world premieres, two nationally recognized annual playwriting awards and readings and workshops by the nation's best emerging and established playwrights. Our numerous education programs serve more than 4,500 students from over 40 Bay Area schools each year. MTC strives to create intimate, powerful and emotional experiences that engage audiences to discuss new ideas and adopt a broader point of view. We believe in taking risks and inspiring people to participate in live theatre, regardless of personal means. MTC celebrates the intellectual curiosity of our community, and we believe that theatre is an important tool to help build empathy. MTC was founded in 1966 and is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.

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