**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

May 19, 2022

**GableStage Proudly Presents**

**Joan Didion’s Powerful Drama *THE YEAR OF MAGICAL THINKING***

Coral Gables, FL— GableStage proudly presents [*The Year of Magical Thinking*,](https://ci.ovationtix.com/473/production/1058887) an account of the year following the death of writer Joan Didion's husband John Gregory Dunne in 2003. The book was immediately acclaimed as a classic memoir about mourning. It won the 2005 National Book Award for Nonfiction and was a finalist for both the N[ational Book Critics Circle Award](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Book_Critics_Circle_Award) and the Pulitzer Prize for Autobiography.

On March 29, 2007, Didion's adaptation of her book for Broadway opened with Vanessa Redgrave as the sole cast member. It has since toured the world with Redgrave reprising her role in London and again in New York City. Now this extraordinary production will be shared with local audiences at the GableStage in the intimate setting it deserves.

Described as “exquisitely controlled and heartbreakingly sad” by *The New York Times,* Didion recounts in searing detail her experiences of grief upon her husband’s unexpected death, and expands upon the memoir by sharing her ordeal with their daughter Quintana’s concurrent illnesses and subsequent untimely death.

Didion deftly makes sense of both the emotional and physical aspects of both her husband and daughter’s experiences, incorporating medical and psychological research on grief and illness.The title of the play refers to magical thinking in the anthropological sense – thinking that if a person hopes for something enough or performs the right actions then an unavoidable event can be averted. Throughout the play, Didion explores her own magical thinking as she makes sense of the "weeks and then months that cut loose any fixed idea [she] ever had about death, about illness…about marriage and children and memory…about the shallowness of sanity, about life itself."

It is a remarkable moment in theatre that tells us how people try to make sense of the senseless and how they somehow go on.

Didion’s character is played by classically-trained regional theatre veteran and voice of audiobooks Sara Morsey, who has said that she strives to inhabit her characters so that the author’s intent is crystal clear. “To be a conduit for the words and ideas of Joan Didion is no less than spine-tingling for me. Don't assume anything about this play, just come see it." The play is directed by Bari Newport in her first year as GableStage’s luminous Producing Artistic Director. “I have been looking forward to directing this outstanding one-woman theatrical experience. Joan Didion was an extraordinary writer who captured the essence of her revelations about life and death and shares them with exquisite sensitivity.”

Newport is joined by a creative team that includes Production Stage Manager Katie Ellison, Scenic Designer Frank J. Oliva, Sound Designer Matt Corey, Lighting Designer Tony Galaska, and Costume Designer Camilla Haith.

*The Year of Magical Thinkin*g is made possible through support from GableStage Trustee Nedra Kalish, in memory of her beloved husband Ron; Trustee Rick Toren and his wife Myrna, in memory of their beloved son David; with additional support from Debbie and Michael Troner, M.D. and Sheila Wagner, in memory of her beloved husband Richard.

The GableStage Theatre is located on the east side of the Biltmore Hotel in Coral Gables at 1200 Anastasia Avenue, Coral Gables, FL 33134.

See you at the theatre!

**Pre-Show with Bari:**

* 1/2 hour before each performance**,** Producing Artistic Director, Bari Newport or another member of the creative team, will deep-dive into the world-of-the-play, outside in the GableStage “Cafe.”

**Sunday Talk Back:**

* Directly following the first Sunday matinee, cast and crew will be available for a post-show Q & A with the audience.

**GABLESTAGE COMMITMENT TO SAFETY**

As COVID-19 is once again causing cancellations of performances, due to the intimate nature of the theatre space and for the safety of actors, staff, crew and patrons, GableStage will be keeping the mask mandate in place until further notice. **Patrons will be required to keep masks on their faces while inside the theatre space.**

**SCHEDULE**

*The Year of Magical Thinking* runs from June 4th through June 26th, with performances from Wednesday through Sunday. Preview performance: Friday, June 3rd at 7 p.m. Opening performance: Saturday, June 4th at 8 p.m.

**SHOWTIMES**

Wednesdays at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Thursday at 7 p.m.

Friday at 8 p.m.

Saturday at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m.

Sunday at 2 p.m.

**TICKETS**

[Tickets start at $35](https://ci.ovationtix.com/473/production/1058887), with discounts available for artists, veterans and Biltmore Hotel members. Students with ID cards and Biltmore employees may see any production free-of-charge by stopping by the box office an hour before the performance of choice begins.

Groups of 10+ receive $8 off each ticket and receive one additional ticket free-of-charge. Subscribers receive the best seats at the best prices. Subscriptions are still available. Visit online at [gablestage.org/tickets](https://www.gablestage.org/tickets-3/), by phone at (305) 445-1119 or email at boxoffice@gablestage.org.

**STREAMING**

Ticket holders can enjoy the show in person or via stream from a location of their choosing. Streaming of *The Year of Magical Thinking* will be available from June 8th through June 26th. Those interested in streaming should purchase a ticket to a specific performance to receive a streaming link for that date/time. The streaming will begin at the same time as the show. It will not be on demand.

**JOIN THE CONVERSATION**

Facebook: Facebook.com/gablestage

Twitter: @gablestage

Instagram: @gablestage

Hashtag: #MagicalThinking

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**WHO IS WHO**

**Joan Didion, Playwright**

Joan Didion, American writer extraordinaire, died in December, 2021. Her career began in the 1950s after she won an essay contest sponsored by *Vogue* magazine. Her writing during the 1960s through the late 1970s engaged audiences in the realities of the counterculture of the 1960s and the Hollywood lifestyle. Her political writing often concentrated on the subtext of political and social rhetoric. In 1991, she wrote the earliest mainstream media article to suggest the Central Park Five had been wrongfully convicted. In 2005, she won the National Book Award for Nonfiction and was a finalist for both the National Book Critics Circle Award and the Pulitzer Prize for *The Year of Magical Thinking.* She later adapted the book into a play, which premiered on Broadway in 2007. In 2013, she was awarded the National Medal of Arts by President Barack Obama. Didion was profiled in the Netflix documentary *The Center Will Not Hold,* directed by her nephew Griffin Dunne, in 2017.

**Bari Newport, Director**

Bari Newportjoined GableStage as producing artistic director in April 2021. She came to Miami from the Penobscot Theatre Company in Bangor, Maine, where she served as producing artistic director for nine seasons. Previously, she was artistic associate at the Alliance Theatre in Atlanta, artistic associate/literary manager at the Pasadena Playhouse, associate producer at Horizon Theatre and associate director of Florida Repertory Theatre.

As a producer, Newport has been responsible for the creation and stabilization of a wide range of artistic initiatives, including extensive work in new play development, education and community engagement. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University of Southern California, where she created the Bill White Memorial Theatre Collection, the university’s first and only theatrical library. She received her Master of Fine Arts from the University of Iowa. Bari was a proud recipient of the Theatre Communications Group’s New Generations: Future Leaders grant, funded by the Carnegie and Doris Duke Foundations. She is a member of SDC and AEA.

**ABOUT THE CAST**

**Sara Morsey**

Sara Morsey (AEA, SAG/AFTRA) has enjoyed a career of over thirty years in professional regional theatre. She is a member of The Ensemble of Actors at Florida Repertory Theatre and has enjoyed a long association with The Hippodrome Theatre in Florida. Recent credits include *Driving Miss Daisy, Long Day’s Journey Into Night, The Little Foxes, Other Desert Cities, The Year of Magical Thinking, August: Osage County, Ripcord* (directed by Bari Newport at Penobscot Theatre and by V. Craig Heidenreich at The Hippodrome). Sara has appeared at *The Edinburgh Festival Fringe* and at The National Palace of Culture in Sofia, Bulgaria, as well as in several independent films and regional theatres across the United States. She has a Master of Fine Arts from The University of Louisville.

**ABOUT THE CREATIVE TEAM**

**Katie Ellison, Production Stage Manager**

Katie is thrilled to be in her fifth season as the Resident Production Stage Manager at GableStage. Outside of GableStage, she has worked with Miami New Drama at the Colony Theatre on their production of *Seven Deadly Sins.* Other credits include Assistant Stage Manager for *Peter and the Starcatcher* at the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts and Assistant Stage Manager for Zoetic Stage’s productions of *Stripped* and *Rapture, Blister, Burn.* She was also the Production Stage Manager for Orchestra Miami’s *Music at The Biltmore* and *The Mice War.* Katie is a proud graduate of the University of Miami with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Stage Management.

**Frank J. Oliva, Scenic Designer**

Frank is a Cuban-American Stage Designer. Born and raised in Miami, he currently lives and works in New York City. Recent projects include world premieres and new productions with The Weston Playhouse Theatre Company, Colorado Springs Theatre Center, Two River Theatre Company, The Guthrie Theatre, Urban Stages, The Kitchen Theatre and The Cincinnati Symphony. Frank was Associate Designer on the recent Broadway productions of *Oklahoma!*, *West Side Story* and *Hangmen.* Forthcoming work includes projects at Gablestage, The SHED, Geva Theatre Center, The Bushwick Starr, Clubbed Thumb and Area Stage Company. Frank received the 2017 Innovative Theatre Award for Stage Design and was nominated for a 2018 Audelco Award for Set Design. His design for the world premiere of *Lost/Not Found* was selected for the American exhibit at the 2019 Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design. Executive Committee Member of Wingspace, a non-profit providing mentorship, fostering conversation and furthering activism in the field of theatrical design. Frank is a member of United Scenic Artists and a graduate of New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts. [www.frankjoliva.com](http://www.frankjoliva.com/) // @frankjoliva

**Matt Corey,** **Sound Designer**

Matt earned his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in bassoon performance at the University of Miami, and currently performs with The Symphonia in Boca Raton. He is the resident sound designer at Zoetic Stage and Theatre Lab in Boca Raton, and has designed over 90 plays at GableStage. He has earned Carbonell Awards for his designs of *The Pillowman*, *Talk Radio, Broadsword*, *Blasted*, *The Birds*, *The Mountaintop*, *The Night of the Iguana*, and most recently, *Every Brilliant Thing*. By day, Matt is the President and CEO of Insight for the Blind in Fort Lauderdale, a 46-year-old charity devoted to recording books, magazines, and other accessible media for the blind and print disabled. Matt would like to thank his wife, Lindsey and his parents for their love and support, always.

**Tony Galaska, Lightning Designer**

Tony is an Associate Professor and Head of Design and Production at Florida International University. His first production with GableStage was *The Children* and his design work has been seen at The Contemporary American Theater Festival, The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey and The Texas Shakespeare Festival, as well as in New York with companies such as Toy Box Theatre Company, The Gallery Players, Wings Theatre Company, Metropolitan Playhouse and New Perspectives Theatre Company NYC. Tony has received Faculty Design Excellence awards from the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival (KCACTF) for his lighting design of *The Cook, Spring Awakening, A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings* and *The House of the Spirits*. Tony is currently Chair of Design, Technology and Management for KCACTF Region IV. He received his Master of Fine Arts in Lighting Design from Purdue University, a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point and an Associate of Arts from the University of Wisconsin-Waukesha.

**Camilla Haith, Costume Designer**

Camilla is a South Florida-based costume designer and wardrobe stylist. She is the owner of Walloping Moll LLC where she designs and builds costumes for opera, cruise ships, theatre, film, unique events and music videos. Theatrical credits include *Intelligence Systems* (SoBe Institute of the Arts - World Premiere), *Fairy Tales Songs of the Dandelion Woman* (SoBe Institute of the Arts - World Premier), and *Fences* (Pennsylvania Centre Stage). Camilla holds an MFA in Costume Design from Penn State, as well as a BFA in Theatre from Penn State and a BFA in Fashion Design from the International Academy of Design and Technology, Chicago.

**Photos here**

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1yGB92ZlIgjtl6qFzPP0BX9ObGWGNCiO1?usp=sharing>

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