



[SUMO REHEARSAL PHOTOS & VIDEO](#)  
[LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE PRODUCTION PHOTOS](#)

## MA-YI THEATER COMPANY AND THE PUBLIC THEATER ANNOUNCE ONE-WEEK EXTENSION FOR NEW YORK PREMIERE OF **SUMO** 相撲

By Lisa Sanaye Dring

A Co-Production of Ma-Yi Theater Company and La Jolla Playhouse

Directed by Ralph B. Peña

Performances Begin with a Joseph Papp Free Performance on Thursday, February 20  
and Run Through Sunday, March 30; Official Press Opening on Wednesday, March 5

AANHPI Theater Night with Post-Show Panel and Reception on Friday, March 7

February 13, 2025 – Ma-Yi Theater Company (Ralph B. Peña, Producing Artistic Director) and The Public Theater (Oskar Eustis, Artistic Director and Patrick Willingham, Executive Director) begin previews for the New York premiere of **SUMO** 相撲 with a Joseph Papp Free Performance on Thursday, February 20. Written by Ma-Yi Theater Company’s 2024 Tow Foundation Resident Playwright **Lisa Sanaye Dring** and directed by Obie Award winner **Ralph B. Peña**, the thrilling new play **SUMO** officially opens in the Anspacher Theater on Wednesday, March 5. Originally scheduled to close on Sunday, March 23, the production has now been extended through Sunday, March 30.

Entrenched in an elite sumo training facility in Tokyo, six men practice, eat, love, play, and ultimately fight. Step into the sacred world of sumo wrestling, with the New York premiere of **Lisa Sanaye Dring’s** mesmerizing new drama, **SUMO**. Akio arrives as an angry, ambitious 18-year-old with a lot to learn. Expecting validation, dominance, and fame, and desperate to move up the ranks, he slams headlong into his fellow wrestlers. With sponsorship money at stake, their bodies on the line, and their futures at risk, the wrestlers struggle to carve themselves—and one another—into the men they dream of being. **SUMO** is a thrilling new play set in an elite and rarely explored world. Obie Award winner **Ralph B. Peña** directs this powerhouse drama.

The complete cast of **SUMO** includes **Kris Bona** (*Kannushi 2*), **Red Concepción** (*Fumio*), **Akira Fukui** (*Understudy Akio/Fumio/Kannushi 3*), **Michael Hisamoto** (*So*), **Ahmad Kamal** (*Ren*), **Earl T. Kim** (*Shinta*), **Hank Lin** (*Understudy Mitsuo/Ren/Shinta/Kannushi 2*), **Haowen Luo** 罗浩闻 (*Understudy So/Kannushi 1*), **David Shih** (*Mitsuo*), **Scott Keiji Takeda** (*Akio*), **Paco Tolson** (*Kannushi 1*), and **Viet Vo** (*Kannushi 3*).

**SUMO** features scenic design by **Wilson Chin**, costume design by **Mariko Ohigashi**, lighting design by **Paul Whitaker**, sound design and music composition by **Fabian Obispo**, hair and wig design by **Alberto “Albee” Alvarado**, projection design by **Hana S. Kim**, prop design by **Thomas Jenkeleit**, and taiko drum composition and performance by **Shih-Wei Wu**. **James Yaegashi** is the sumo consultant and co-fight

director, and **Chelsea Pace** is co-fight and intimacy director. **Amrita Ramanan** is the dramaturg. **Alyssa K. Howard** serves as production stage manager and **Taeuk Kang** as stage manager.

This production marks the third collaborative production between Ma-Yi Theater Company and The Public Theater, following successful runs of *Teenage Dick* by Mike Lew in 2018 and *The Chinese Lady* by Lloyd Suh in 2022. The Public is proud to continue working with Ma-Yi and to honor and celebrate their important mission of providing a home for Asian American artists, while producing theater that breaks boundaries.

The Astor Place season continues with **GLASS. KILL. WHAT IF IF ONLY. IMP.**, a quartet of inventive plays written by groundbreaking playwright **Caryl Churchill** and directed by **James Macdonald**. Finally, the season will conclude with the New York Premiere of **GODDESS**, a new musical and a rousing tale of romance, the supernatural, and the quest towards one's truest self. The production is conceived and directed by Associate Artistic Director/Resident Director **Saheem Ali**, features music and lyrics by **Michael Thurber**, a book by Tony Award nominee **Jocelyn Bioh**, and choreography by **Darrell Grand Moultrie**.

Following a significant revitalization, The Delacorte Theater, home of Free Shakespeare in the Park, will reopen in Summer 2025 with a production of Shakespeare's classic comedy **TWELFTH NIGHT**, also directed by The Public's Associate Artistic Director/Resident Director, Tony Award nominee **Saheem Ali**, and featuring Public Theater alumni **Bill Camp**, **Khris Davis**, **Peter Dinklage**, **Jesse Tyler Ferguson**, **Lupita Nyong'o**, **Sandra Oh**, and **Daphne Rubin-Vega** and Public debuts **b**, **Junior Nyong'o**, and **Moses Sumney**. Free Shakespeare will also be accessible across the city through Mobile Unit's **MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING**, in a production directed by **Rebecca Martinez** that will tour the five boroughs, and a new Public Works adaptation of **PERICLES**, with music and lyrics by **Troy Anthony** and directed by **Carl Cofield**, at The Cathedral of St. John the Divine.

The Library serves food and drink beginning at 6:00 p.m. and closing at midnight. The Library is closed on Mondays. For more information, visit [publictheater.org](http://publictheater.org).

## **BIOS:**

**LISA SANAYE DRING** (*Playwright*) is a writer and director from Hilo, Hawaii, and Reno, Nevada. She is the current Tow Foundation Writer in Residence with Ma-Yi Theater Company. *SUMO* received its world premiere with La Jolla Playhouse and Ma-Yi Theater Company in 2023. Dring's play *Kairos* is currently receiving a Rolling World Premiere with the National New Play Network. Dring has won an Edgerton Award, a Broadway World Award for Best New Play, and the PLAY LA Stage Raw/Humanitas Prize. They have been a finalist for the Relentless Award, the O'Neill Playwrights' Conference (2 times), the Seven Devils Playwrights Conference, and a 2-time finalist (one honorable mention) for the Bay Area Playwrights Festival. Her work has also been developed/produced by The Geffen, The New Group, Actors Theatre of Louisville, East West Players, Circle X, Antaeus Theater Company, Rogue Artists Ensemble, and the Contemporary American Theater Festival. They have worked with Meow Wolf and have been awarded fellowships at MacDowell, Blue Mountain Center, and Yaddo. She was awarded the 2021 Dorothy and Granville Hicks Residency at Yaddo, which honors one promising young writer a year. She received an Emmy nomination for Outstanding Interactive Programming for a piece she co-wrote and co-directed with Matt Hill called "Welcome to the Blumhouse Live."

**RALPH B. PEÑA** (*Director*) is an Obie Award-winning theatermaker based in New York City. Recent directing credits include *The Far Country* (Yale Repertory), the world premiere of Lisa Sanaye Dring's *SUMO* (La Jolla Playhouse/Ma-Yi), Lloyd Suh's *The Chinese Lady* (Ma-Yi/The Public Theater, Indiana Rep, Long Wharf Theater, Barrington Stage; Drama Desk, Lortel, New York Outer Critics Circle, Berkshire Theater Critics, CT Critics Circle nominations), Michael Lew's *Tiger Style!* (South Coast Repertory), and Daniel K. Isaac's *ONCE UPON A (korean) TIME* for Ma-Yi Theater Company, where Peña is currently Producing Artistic Director. For Ma-Yi he has also directed the world premieres of Hansol Jung's *Among The Dead*, Michael Lew's *microcrisis*, and Lloyd Suh's *The Wong Kids* (Off-Broadway Alliance Best Children's Play) and *Children of Vonderly*. He wrote and directed the short film *Vancouver* (Cannes World Film Festival, L.A. Indie Festival, NY International Film Award for Best Short and Best Director, 2023

UNIMA Citation of Excellence), and the documentary “20 Years of Asian American Playwriting” for PBS / ALL ARTS. He is a Sundance Theater Directing Fellow and a member of Ensemble Studio Theater.

**MA-YI THEATER COMPANY** is a professional Off-Broadway not-for-profit organization whose primary mission is to develop and produce new and innovative plays by Asian American writers. It is the country’s leading incubator of AAPI works, with numerous award-winning productions that include Lloyd Suh’s *The Chinese Lady*, Daniel K. Issac’s *ONCE UPON A (korean) TIME*, Hansol Jung’s *Wolf Play* and *Among The Dead*, Mike Lew’s *Teenage Dick* and *Bike America*, Qui Nguyen’s *The Inexplicable Redemption of Agent G* and *Soul Samurai* (with *Vampire Cowboys*), *Rescue Me* by Michi Barall, and Lonnie Carter’s *The Romance of Magno Rubio*. Ma-Yi Theater is home to the renowned Ma-Yi Writers Lab, the largest collective of AAPI writers in the country. [ma-yitheatre.org](http://ma-yitheatre.org) and [ma-yistudios.com](http://ma-yistudios.com)

**LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE** is a place where artists and audiences come together to create what’s new and next in the American theatre, from Tony Award-winning productions, to imaginative programs for young audiences, to interactive experiences outside its theatre walls. Led by Tony winner Christopher Ashley, the Rich Family Artistic Director of La Jolla Playhouse, and Managing Director Debby Buchholz, the Playhouse is internationally renowned for the development of new plays and musicals, including mounting 120 world premieres, commissioning 70 new works, and sending 36 productions to Broadway, garnering a total of 38 Tony Awards, plus the 1993 Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre. [LaJollaPlayhouse.org](http://LaJollaPlayhouse.org)

**THE PUBLIC** continues the work of its visionary founder Joe Papp as a civic institution engaging, both on-stage and off, with some of the most important ideas and social issues of today. Conceived over 60 years ago as one of the nation’s first nonprofit theaters, The Public has long operated on the principles that theater is an essential cultural force and that art and culture belong to everyone. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Oskar Eustis and Executive Director Patrick Willingham, The Public’s wide breadth of programming includes an annual season of new work at its landmark home at Astor Place, Free Shakespeare in the Park at The Delacorte Theater in Central Park, the Mobile Unit touring throughout New York City’s five boroughs, Public Lab, Public Works, Public Shakespeare Initiative, and Joe’s Pub. Since premiering *HAIR* in 1967, The Public continues to create the canon of American Theater and is currently represented on Broadway by the Tony Award-winning musicals *Hamilton* by Lin-Manuel Miranda, *Suffs* by Shaina Taub, and *Hell’s Kitchen* by Alicia Keys and Kristoffer Diaz. Their programs and productions can also be seen regionally across the country and around the world. The Public has received 64 Tony Awards, 195 Obie Awards, 62 Drama Desk Awards, 61 Lortel Awards, 36 Outer Critic Circle Awards, 13 New York Drama Critics’ Circle Awards, 70 AUDELCO Awards, 6 Antonyo Awards, and 6 Pulitzer Prizes. [publictheater.org](http://publictheater.org)

The Public Theater stands in honor of the first inhabitants and our ancestors. We acknowledge the land on which The Public and its theaters stand—the original homeland of the Lenape people. We acknowledge the painful history of genocide and forced removal from this territory. We honor the generations of stewards and we pay our respects to the many diverse indigenous peoples still connected to this land.

**The LuEsther T. Mertz Legacy Trust** provides leadership support for The Public Theater's year-round activities.

### **TICKET INFORMATION**

**SUMO** begins performances in The Public’s Anspacher Theater with a Joseph Papp Free Performance on Thursday, February 20 and officially opens on Wednesday, March 5. Originally scheduled to close on Sunday, March 23, the production has been extended one week through Sunday, March 30.

Tickets are available now and can be accessed by visiting [publictheater.org](http://publictheater.org), calling **212.967.7555**, or in person at the Taub Box Office at The Public Theater at 425 Lafayette Street.

The Public’s Joseph Papp Free Performance initiative will offer free tickets to the performance on Thursday, February 20 through TodayTix. The Lottery is now open for entries until 12:00 p.m. on

Wednesday, February 19. Winners will be notified by email and push notification anytime from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., and if selected, winners will have one hour to claim their tickets.

The performance schedule is Tuesday through Sunday at 7:00 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday at 1:00 p.m. (*There will be no 1:00 p.m. performance on Saturday, February 22 or Sunday, February 23. The performance on Thursday, February 27 will be at 7:30 p.m. The performances on Wednesday, March 12 and Thursday, March 13 will be at 1:00 p.m.*)

The community performance on Friday, March 7 at 7:00 p.m. will be an **AANHPI Theater Night**. After the performance, there will be an on-stage panel conversation followed by a reception held on The Public's mezzanine. The post-show conversation, focused on masculinity, physicality and its political impacts, will include playwright **Lisa Sanaye Dring**, sumo consultant and co-fight director **James Yaegashi**, and New York State Assemblymember **Ron Kim**. AANHPI audience members can use promo code **SUMOAANHPI** to access \$45 tickets for this performance.

Two additional post-show conversations will be held on later dates. After the performance on Saturday, March 15 at 1:00 p.m., there will be a panel conversation discussing how sumo has been featured in art throughout history. On Thursday, March 27 at 7:00 p.m., the post-show discussion will focus on the cultural significance and evolution of this ancient Japanese tradition. Speakers will be announced at a later date.

On Sunday, March 9 at 1:00 p.m., the performance will include **Spanish Open Captions**. The **English Open Captioned** performances will be on Saturday, March 15 at 1:00 p.m. and Wednesday, March 26 at 7:00 p.m. The **Audio Described** performance will be on Sunday, March 16 at 1:00 p.m. The **American Sign Language Interpreted** performance will be on Thursday, March 20 at 7:00 p.m. On Saturday, March 22 at 1:00 p.m., the performance will include **Traditional Chinese Open Captions**. The performance on Sunday, March 23 at 1:00 p.m. will **require patrons to wear masks**.

The full performance calendar can be found at [publictheater.org](https://publictheater.org).

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