



CHANCE THEATER
Bette Aitken *theater arts* Center
5522 E La Palma Ave
Anaheim, CA 92807
www.ChanceTheater.com/press-room

February 18, 2026

MEDIA CONTACT: Shinshin Tsai, Producing Associate, (949) 346-2374 or
shinshin@chancetheater.com

FOR PHOTOS OF THE CAST: www.ChanceTheater.com/press-room

WEST COAST PREMIERE FROM OUR 2016 RESIDENT PLAYWRIGHT

The Messenger

ANAHEIM, CA — Chance Theater, Anaheim's official resident theater company, is thrilled to announce the second show of its 2026 Season, *The Messenger*, written by Chance's 2016 Resident Playwright **Jenny Connell Davis** (*Matinicus: The Story of Abigail Burgess*, *The Dragon Play*) and directed by **Katie Chidester** (*What the Constitution Means to Me*, *Tiny Beautiful Things*, Chance Resident Artist).

The Messenger received its World Premiere at Palm Beach Dramaworks, and **Chance Theater** is proud to present the West Coast Premiere as part of its 2026 Season.

What does it cost to stay silent? What does it take to finally speak? From the playwright who brought you *Matinicus: The Story of Abigail Burgess* comes a gripping new play about memory, resilience, and the courage to resist hate. Based on real events in both our past and imagined history, *The Messenger* brings together the voices of four women across generations, each wrestling with prejudice, survival, and the choice to raise their voices against hate. At the heart of the play is Georgia Gabor, a Hungarian Holocaust survivor whose verbatim testimony demands that history not be forgotten. Her story resonates alongside imagined women from 1969, 1993, and 2020, all based in Pasadena, as each faces their own battles with injustice. This gripping new work is both remembrance and rallying cry, challenging us to ask where our own voices are needed today and reminding us that silence has never been neutral.

Jenny Connell Davis shares, "I wrote this play in 2022, and it's becoming more relevant than I hoped it would be. *The Messenger* is inspired by the life and words of Holocaust survivor Georgia Gabor, but the story I needed to tell wasn't just hers — it was about amplifying her

message: that this can happen anywhere. History repeats itself unless we do something to change it. This is something we've fought before, and it's a fight we're still in."

Director Chidester notes, "*The Messenger* brings together four stories spanning decades in Southern California, inviting us to reflect on memory, moral responsibility, and what happens when people choose silence."

She continues, "Before starting this project, I had never heard of Georgia Gabor, the heart of this play. Since then, I've been incredibly moved by her strength and resilience. Gabor dedicated her life to sharing her experiences, not for recognition or personal gain, but because she believed deeply in the importance of understanding how and why the Holocaust happened. For her, this wasn't just history, it was a warning. She wanted future generations to see how easily these events can happen again if we are not paying attention. As a director, it's a privilege to help bring this story to the stage. Sharing this play feels like a way to honor Georgia Gabor's legacy of extraordinary testimony and remembrance."

Joining Chidester on the design team for *The Messenger* is scenic and costume designer **Bruce Goodrich** (*Such Small Hands*), lighting designer **Christian D. Henrriquez** (*Edges*), sound designer **Hunter Moody** (*Tick, Tick... Boom!*), projection designer **Nick Santiago** (*Once*), stage manager **Bebe Herrera** (*The Chinese Lady*, Chance Resident Artist), dramaturg **Jonathan Josephson** (*The Seagull*), and casting director **Shinshin Yuder Tsai** (*Scrooge! The Musical*, Chance Resident Artist).

Community Partner for this production is **Muzeo Museum & Cultural Center**, whose mission to preserve and illuminate history through exhibitions and cultural programming makes them a natural collaborator for *The Messenger*.

Chance Theater is honored that the children of Georgia Gabor will attend select performances and participate in talkbacks, offering audiences a rare opportunity to engage directly with the living legacy of her testimony. Their presence reinforces the play's central question: how do we carry history forward with integrity and action?

The incredibly talented all-women cast features a mix of newcomers and returning actors: **Juliet Fischer** (*Such Small Hands*) plays Georgia Gabor, **Megan Sigler** (*Scrooge! The Musical*) plays 1969, **Rori Flynn** (Chance debut) plays 1993, and **Kallie Pong** (Chance debut) plays 2020.

Tickets for *The Messenger* are on sale now at <https://chancetheater.com/messenger/> or by calling the box office at (888) 455-4212. Early booking is recommended due to high demand.

For press inquiries, interviews, press comps, or photos, please contact Producing Associate Shinshin Tsai at (949) 346-2374 or Shinshin@chancetheater.com.

SUPPORTERS

Executive Producers: Sophie & Larry Cripe; David & Danice Limberg; Rachelle Menaker & Eddie Schuller

Associate Producers: Susan Bowman & Freddie Greenfield; Linda Maggard

Season Producers: Bette & Wylie Aitken

Associate Season Producer: The Family of Mary Kay Fyda-Mar

Community Partner: Muzeo Museum & Cultural Center

We are deeply grateful for their extraordinary generosity and commitment.

CRITICS HAVE RAVED

“The Messenger is scarily relevant, attendance should be required.”

— *The Stages of MN*

“...this highly praised young playwright continues to be someone to watch.... engaging... fun with a satisfyingly intelligent underpinning.”

— *TheatreMania*

“...drives home the importance of speaking out against hate, and the complicity of silence.”

— *Palm Beach Post* review (via Yahoo)

“Unquestionably, *The Messenger* ... is a timely and timeless, chilling cautionary drama.”

— *Theatrical Musings*

SPECIAL EVENTS

Design Preview Party is on Monday, February 23, 2026, where members of Chance Theater gain insights from the Director, Designers, and Cast about the artistic vision behind the Show.

Community Spotlight is on Saturday, April 11, 2026 starting at 2:00 PM. This special afternoon is dedicated to celebrating the vibrant community surrounding Chance Theater. Join us for a pre- and post-performance happy hour designed to foster meaningful conversation and connection.

Pride Night is on Saturday, April 11, 2026, starting at 7:00 PM. Theater lovers who share an identity can come together over refreshments and conversation. Before enjoying the performance, this special event provides a welcoming space to connect with others in the community, celebrate shared experiences, and engage in meaningful dialogue.

Wine Night is back by popular demand on Friday, April 10, 2026 starting at 7:00 PM where you can enjoy exclusive wines generously donated by long-time supporters Judy & David Joss. The first 50 patrons through the door will receive complimentary access to these special wines, with priority access given to members and their guests. It's the perfect way to kick off the evening before the show begins!

Pay-What-You-Choose Previews tickets are available for every show we produce for as low as \$12 per ticket, and **SaverTIX** are available for every performance after opening. Our goal with these initiatives is to make live theater accessible to everyone in our community, regardless of financial barriers.

Post-Show Discussion: Every performance features post-show conversations, inviting audiences to engage with the cast, crew, and community partners.

ABOUT CHANCE THEATER

Proud to be one of the leading ensemble-driven theatre companies in Southern California, Chance Theater has received the National Theatre Company grant from American Theatre Wing for “nurturing a community of artists in ways that strengthen and demonstrate the quality, diversity, and dynamism of American theatre.” The Chance won 31 OCTG Theatre Awards, including two for Outstanding Production of a Musical (“Next to Normal” and “Fun Home”) and one for Outstanding Production of a Play (“Cry It Out”). Previously, Chance Theater won eight

Ovation Awards, including four for Best Production of a Musical (Intimate Theatre), and four LADCC Awards, including the Polly Warfield Award for Outstanding Season. The Anaheim City Council named Chance Theater “the Official Resident Theater Company of Anaheim” in 2014, and Arts Orange County has twice named the Chance as “Outstanding Arts Organization.” Known for using bold and personal storytelling to promote dialogue and connection within the Southern California theatrical landscape, the Chance is committed to contributing to a more compassionate, connected, and creative community. As a constituent member of Theatre Communications Group, The Theatrical Producers League of Los Angeles, and OC Theatre Guild, Chance Theater continues to bring national attention to the Southern California and Orange County theater scenes.

CALENDAR LISTING

What does it cost to stay silent? What does it take to finally speak? From the playwright who brought you *Matinicus: The Story of Abigail Burgess* comes a gripping new play about memory, resilience, and the courage to resist hate. Based on real events in both our past and much more recent history, *The Messenger* brings together the voices of four women across generations, each wrestling with prejudice, survival, and the choice to raise their voices against hate. At the heart of the play is Georgia Gabor, a Hungarian Holocaust survivor whose verbatim testimony demands that history not be forgotten. Her story resonates alongside imagined women from 1969, 1993, and 2020, all based in Pasadena, as each faces their own battles with injustice. This gripping new work is both remembrance and rallying cry. It challenges us to ask where our own voices are needed today, and reminds us that silence has never been neutral.

WHEN:

Previews: March 27 - April 3, 2026; Fridays at 8PM, Saturday at 8PM, and Sunday at 7PM

Opening Night: Saturday April 4, 2026 at 8PM

Remaining Performances: April 5 - April 19, 2026

Fridays at 8PM, Saturdays at 3PM & 8PM, and Sundays at 3PM

FULL PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE:

- Fri, Mar 27 @ 8:00 pm - PREVIEW
- Sat, Mar 28 @ 8:00 pm - PREVIEW
- Sun, Mar 29 @ 7:00 pm - PREVIEW
- Fri, Apr 3 @ 8:00 pm - PREVIEW

- Sat, Apr 4 @ 8:00 pm - OPENING
- Sun, Apr 5 @ 3:00 pm
- Fri, Apr 10 @ 8:00 pm
- Sat, Apr 11 @ 3:00 pm
- Sat, Apr 11 @ 8:00 pm
- Sun, Apr 12 @ 3:00 pm - Georgia Gabor's children attending (tentative)
- Fri, Apr 17 @ 8:00 pm - (Public Sale for closing weekend begins Mar 27)
- Sat, Apr 18 @ 3:00 pm
- Sat, Apr 18 @ 8:00 pm
- Sun, Apr 19 @ 3:00 pm - CLOSING

RUNNING TIME: 1 hour, 30 minutes with no intermission

TICKETS: \$12-\$48, with discounts for educators, veterans, seniors, and students.

Pay-What-You-Can preview performances and SaverTIX are also available to ensure that live theater is accessible to everyone.

WHERE: Chance Theater @ Bette Aitken *theater arts* Center on the Cripe Stage
5522 E. La Palma Ave., Anaheim, CA 92807

DRIVING DIRECTIONS: Chance Theater @ Bette Aitken *theater arts* Center is located at 5522 E. La Palma Avenue in Anaheim Hills. Going west on La Palma from Imperial Highway, we are on the left in the front of the industrial park just past the In & Out. There is plenty of free convenient parking in front of the theater.

MORE INFO: www.ChanceTheater.com or call (888) 455-4212

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