

**PRESS RELEASE
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**AURORA THEATRE COMPANY IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE CASTING FOR
The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe
By Jane Wagner**

**Renowned Solo Performer and Stand-Up Comedian
MARGA GOMEZ
Joins Aurora Theatre Company's 2025 Production
JULY 12 - AUGUST 10**

Berkeley, CA – Aurora Theatre Company is thrilled to announce that celebrated writer/performer and comedian Marga Gomez will star in Jane Wagner's iconic play, *The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe*. Gomez, an acclaimed performer known for her sharp wit and dynamic storytelling, brings her unique voice to this one-woman tour de force. A trailblazer in comedy and theater, Gomez has garnered numerous accolades, including the GLAAD Media Award for Theatre, and has captivated audiences with her celebrated solo shows and stand-up performances.

On stepping into this role, Gomez shares:

"There are so many Signs of Stupid Life in 2025 that I am excited to revive this iconic play to experience something way more intelligent. I first saw "Search" on Broadway when I was hitting open mics and working odd jobs. I was awed. I had goosebumps. If anyone told me back then I would be performing Jane and Lily's iconic characters someday I would have freaked out. I'm still freaking out but I can't wait."

Directed by Jennifer King, Aurora's production promises a fresh take on Wagner's timeless masterpiece, resonating with contemporary audiences while honoring the spirit of the original work.

"I couldn't be more thrilled to see Marga Gomez stepping in to Lily Tomlin's iconic role," said Josh Costello, Aurora's Artistic Director.

"Anyone who has seen Marga perform, be it her stand-up comedy, one of her incredible solo shows, or performing in a play like Fefu and Her Friends at ACT, knows she is a Bay Area treasure. There has always been a connection between Lily Tomlin's work and Marga's, so it's fitting that Marga will be the one to perform Search for Signs at Aurora."

About the Play

Originally performed by Lily Tomlin in its groundbreaking 1985 debut and revived Off-Broadway by Cecily Strong in 2022, Wagner's *The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe* is a comedic and poignant exploration of humanity through the eyes of Trudy, an eccentric bag lady who serves as a bridge between Earth and the cosmos. Trudy becomes a whole cast of quirky and unforgettable characters, revealing the invisible threads that connect us all. Through a

kaleidoscope of these interconnected characters, the play examines themes of identity, gender, and the human condition.

About Playwright Jane Wagner

Jane Wagner has won numerous awards, including two Peabodys, four Emmys, a Writer's Guild Award for her work in television, and the seldom-given New York Drama Critics' Circle Special Award for her Broadway success, *The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe*. Wagner made her writing debut with the acclaimed CBS teleplay entitled *J.T.* (1969) and her book of the same title. In 1971, Wagner began working with Lily Tomlin on an Edith Ann album, *Edith Ann: And That's the Truth* (1972). Wagner's later credits include two more Grammy-nominated albums, *Modern Scream* (1975) and *On Stage* (1978), which she also produced, eight Lily Tomlin television specials (1973 – 82), three Edith Ann animated specials (1994 – 96), and Edith Ann's book, *My Life, So Far* (1994).

In 1977, Wagner wrote and directed for Broadway *Appearing Nitely* and also wrote the screenplay for *The Incredible Shrinking Woman*. In 1985, Wagner brought *The Search* to Broadway where it became an acclaimed play of the Broadway season. The hardcover edition of *The Search* became the first play in 20 years to appear on the New York Times Best-Seller list.

In 2019, Lincoln Center honored Wagner and Tomlin with a retrospective of their careers, *Two Free Women*. In 2020, Wagner was honored with the prestigious Lambda Literary Visionary Award, for her innovative work.

About Director Jennifer King

Jennifer King† will direct *The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe* for Aurora Theatre Company this June. Previous Aurora productions include *Hurricane Diane* and *Dry Powder* as well as the staged reading of *Talley and Sons*. Her Bay Area and international directing credits include work with the Prague Shakespeare Company, Capital Stage, Shakespeare Napa Valley, SF PlayGround, Berkeley Playhouse, Sonoma County Repertory Theater, Symmetry Theater, and Actors' Reading Collective.

In addition to her role as an Associate Artist with the Prague Shakespeare Company, where she directed *The Comedy of Errors*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Jennifer has created work in the UK, Poland, Germany, Italy, and, most recently, China. She also serves as the Head of Theater and Film Studies at Napa Valley College, where she founded and continues to lead Shakespeare Napa Valley. Jennifer is a member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society.

More About Marga Gomez

Marga Gomez is the writer/performer of fifteen solo plays which have been presented Off-Broadway, nationally and internationally. Her acting credits include stage: *The Vagina Monologues* with Rita Moreno, A.C.T.'s *Fefu and Her Friends*, and television: *Sense8* (Netflix) *Tracy Takes On...* (HBO) She is the recipient of a GLAAD Media Award for Theatre and a 2022

fellowship from United States Artists as well as a 2024 San Francisco Arts Council Grant. She is also one of the nation's first out lesbians in stand-up comedy. Her television appearances include LOGO's *One Night Stand Up* and HBO's *Comic Relief* by special invitation from Robin Williams who called Marga "Amazing.. a lesbian Lenny Bruce." She began her comedy career performing in San Francisco's LGBTQ comedy clubs. Her website is margagomez.com.

†Member, Stage Directors and Choreographers Society

CALENDAR EDITORS

Closing their 2024/2025 Season, Aurora Theatre Company presents Jane Wagner's *The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe* starring celebrated Bay Area writer/performer and comedian Marga Gomez.

The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe will be presented in-person on Aurora's mainstage from **JULY 12 - AUG 10 (Opening Night: Thursday JULY 17)**.

Aurora will also offer a week of streaming *The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe* performances for audiences to enjoy in their homes. Streaming performances will run concurrently with in-person performances **Aug 5 - 10**.

PERFORMANCES

Previews

Sat, July 12 at 8:00pm
Sun, July 13 at 2:00pm
Tues, July 15 at 7:00pm
Weds, July 16 at 7:00pm

Opening

Thurs, July 17 at 7:00pm

Run

Tuesday through Friday at 7:00pm
Saturday at 8:00pm
Sunday at 2:00pm
Saturday Matinees at 2:00pm on July 26, Aug 2 & 9

Two performances per week (WEDNESDAY evenings and SUNDAY matinees) are designated mask-required performances. For all other performances, masks will be encouraged but not required. Aurora's policy will apply to everyone inside the building other than the actors, including all audience, ushers, and staff.

Closing

Sun, Aug 10 at 2:00pm

WHERE

Aurora Theatre Company, 2081 Addison Street, Berkeley, CA

TICKETS

VIP Reserved:

General Admission: \$30; \$27 for Subscribers.

The public can call (510) 843-4822 or visit www.auroratheatre.org

Press Tickets: Please do not respond to this media advisory for review tickets. Press review invites will be sent to selected media.

ABOUT AURORA THEATRE COMPANY

As the storyteller for our community, Aurora Theatre Company inspires new audiences and longtime theatre lovers alike with the visceral power of live theatre. Our venues, the most intimate professional stages in the Bay Area, highlight great acting, nuanced language, and an immediacy that makes for exhilarating theatre. By telling deeply relevant stories, we're building a new culture of theatregoing in the Bay Area and contributing to a revitalization of theatre nationwide, challenging all of us to think deeper, laugh louder, and engage more purposefully and profoundly with our neighbors and our world. Aurora has an operating budget of \$1.7 million.

Aurora Theatre Company gratefully acknowledges Associate Season Sponsors: Thomas Edwards & Rebecca Parlette-Edwards, Ellen & Barry Levine, Craig & Kathy Moody; Executive Production Sponsors: Rosalind & Sung-Hou Kim; Production Sponsors: Dr. Paul Li & Catherine Johnston, Patrick Laney & Kinman Tong.

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