

## LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE ANNOUNCES BROADWAY-SEASONED CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM FOR NEXT WORLD-PREMIERE OF *THE SQUIRRELS*

**PLAYHOUSE KICKS OFF SEASON WITH NEW PLAY BY TONY AWARD NOMINEE  
ROBERT ASKINS, DIRECTED BY PLAYHOUSE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AND  
2017 TONY WINNER CHRISTOPHER ASHLEY**

La Jolla, CA – La Jolla Playhouse announces the cast and creative team for its world-premiere production of *The Squirrels*, by Tony Award nominee **Robert Askins** (*Hand to God*), directed by 2017 Tony Award winner and La Jolla Playhouse Artistic Director **Christopher Ashley**, running **June 5 – July 8** (press opening: Wednesday, June 14 at 7:30pm) in the Playhouse's Mandell Weiss Forum.

The cast features **Terence Archie** (Broadway's *Rocky*) as "Scurius," **Candy Buckley** (Playhouse's *Kill Local*) as "Mammalia," **Lakisha May** (Off Broadway's *Everybody*) as "Chordata," Tony Award nominee **Brad Oscar** (Broadway's *The Producers*, *Something Rotten*) as "Scientist/Sciuridae," **Marcus Terrell Smith** (*Book of Mormon* national tour) as "Carolinensus" and local actor **Summer Spiro** (Playhouse's DNA New Work Series) as "Rodentia," along with UC San Diego M.F.A. students **Sidney Hill**, **Max Singer** and **Danielle Wineman** as Squirrel Ensemble members.

The creative team includes Tony Award winner **Beowulf Boritt** (*Come From Away*), Scenic Designer; Tony Award winner and UC San Diego M.F.A. alumna **Paloma Young** (*Peter and the Starcatcher*), Costume Designer; **Tyler Micoleau** (Playhouse's *Miss You Like Hell*; Broadway's *The Band's Visit*), Lighting Designer; **Cricket S. Meyers** (Playhouse's *Guards at the Taj*), Sound Designer; **John Narun** (Playhouse's *Blueprints to Freedom*), Projection Designer; **Gabriel Greene**, Dramaturg; and **Joshua Pilote**, Stage Manager.

Winter is on the way and the squirrels are restless. Mistrust is growing between the rich Gray Squirrels and the outcast Fox Squirrels. When a wily outsider gets in the mix, he ignites an epic animal kingdom soap opera teeming with rebel armies, conspiracy, love and family loyalties. No squirrel will go unharmed in this deliciously demented new comedy from Tony Award nominee Robert Askins.

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"This savagely funny new play is at once contemporary and Shakespearean," noted **Ashley**. "Featuring a stellar, multi-talented cast and creative team, not to mention a 24-foot tree, *The Squirrels* touches on today's socio-political issues through the singular lens of Rob Askins' untethered imagination."

Cypress, Texas-born **Robert Askins** (Playwright) is the author of the Tony-nominated and Obie Award-winning Broadway hit, *Hand to God*, which enjoyed a run on London's West End and was nominated for the Olivier Award for Best New Comedy. His comedy *Fish Display* was part of the 2012 Ojai Playwrights Conference, and his play *Permission*, also developed at OPC, had its world premiere off-Broadway at MCC Theater in spring 2015. Askins is currently working on a new musical and plays with La Jolla Playhouse, the Alley Theatre, and Joey Parnes Productions. In addition, he's a writer on the AMC series *The Son*, starring Pierce Brosnan. He is the recipient of two EST/Sloan grants, the Helen Merrill Emerging Playwrights Award, and an Arch and Bruce Davis Award for Playwriting. Askins is a graduate of Baylor University.

**Christopher Ashley** (Director) has served as La Jolla Playhouse's Artistic Director since October, 2007. During his tenure, he has helmed the Playhouse's productions of *Hollywood*, *The Darrell Hammond Project*, *Chasing the Song*, *His Girl Friday*, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, *A Dram of Drummhicit*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Restoration* and the musicals *Escape to Margaritaville*, *Xanadu*, *Memphis*, which won four 2010 Tony Awards including Best Musical, and *Come From Away*, for which he won the 2017 Tony Award for Best Director of a Musical. He also spearheaded the Playhouse's Without Walls (WOW) series, the DNA New Work Series and the Resident Theatre program. Prior to joining the Playhouse, he directed the Broadway productions of *Xanadu* (Drama Desk nomination), *All Shook Up* and *The Rocky Horror Show* (Tony, Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle Award nominations), as well as the Kennedy Center Sondheim Celebration productions of *Sweeney Todd* and *Merrily We Roll Along*. Other New York credits include: *Blown Sideways Through Life*, *Jeffrey* (Lucille Lortel and Obie Awards), *The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told*, *Valhalla*, *Regrets Only*, *Wonder of the World*, *Communicating Doors*, *Bunny Bunny*, *The Night Hank Williams Died* and *Fires in the Mirror* (Lucille Lortel Award), among others. Mr. Ashley also directed the feature films *Jeffrey* and *Lucky Stiff*, as well as the American Playhouse production of *Blown Sideways Through Life* for PBS. Mr. Ashley is the recipient of the Princess Grace Award, the Drama League Director Fellowship and an NEA/TCG Director Fellowship.

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**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 our theatre walls. Currently led by 2017 Tony Award-winning Artistic Director Christopher Ashley and Managing Director Debby Buchholz, the Playhouse was founded in 1947 by Gregory Peck, Dorothy McGuire and Mel Ferrer. Playhouse artists and audiences have taken part in the development of new plays and musicals, including mounting 95 world premieres, commissioning 50 new works, and sending 32 productions to Broadway, among them the currently-running hit musicals *Come From Away*, *Escape to Margaritaville* and *SUMMER: The Donna Summer Musical* – garnering a total of 38 Tony Awards, including the 1993 Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre. For more information, visit [LaJollaPlayhouse.org](http://LaJollaPlayhouse.org).

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## FACT SHEET

**WHAT:** *The Squirrels*  
By Robert Askins; Directed by Christopher Ashley

**WHEN:** **June 5 – July 8** (Press Opening: Wednesday, June 13 at 7:30pm)  
Tue/Wed at 7:30pm; Thu/Fri/Sat at 8pm; Sun at 7pm; Sat/Sun at 2pm

**WHERE:** **Mandell Weiss Forum, La Jolla Playhouse**  
2910 La Jolla Village Drive, La Jolla, CA 92037

**WHO:** Scenic Design: Beowulf Boritt  
Lighting Design: Tyler Micoeau  
Projection Design: John Narun  
Casting: Tara Rubin Casting

Costume Design: Paloma Young  
Sound Design: Cricket S. Myers  
Dramaturg: Gabriel Greene  
Stage Manager: Joshua Pilote

Cast: *Scurius*  
*Mammalia*  
*Chordata*  
*Scientist/Sciuridae*  
*Carolinensus*  
*Rodentia*  
*Squirrel Ensemble*

Terence Archie  
Candy Buckley  
Lakisha May  
Brad Oscar  
Marcus Terrell Smith  
Summer Spiro  
Sidney Hill, Max Singer, Danielle Wineman

**BACKGROUND:** Winter is on the way and the squirrels are restless. Mistrust is growing between the rich Gray Squirrels and the outcast Fox Squirrels. When a wily outsider gets in the mix, he ignites an epic animal kingdom soap opera teeming with rebel armies, conspiracy, love and family loyalties. No squirrel will go unharmed in this deliciously demented new comedy from Tony Award nominee Robert Askins.

### ADDITIONAL EVENTS:

- **Foodie Fridays:** June 8, 15, 22, 29; July 6; pre-show food trucks starting at 6pm
- **Sonic Saturdays:** June 9, 16, 23, 30; July 7; pre-show, live band entertainment
- **Talkback Tuesdays:** June 12 and 19, following the 7:30pm performance
- **Insider Events:** Wed, June 27 at 6:45pm and Sat, June 30 at 1:15pm
- **Discovery Sunday:** July 1, following the 2pm performance
- **ACCESS Performance:** Saturday, June 23 at 2pm

**TICKETS:** (858) 550-1010; [LaJollaPlayhouse.org](http://LaJollaPlayhouse.org)

**SPONSORS:** Brian and Silvija Devine; Selzer, Caplan, McMahon, Vitek