

LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE NAMES BACKYARD RENAISSANCE AS 2018/2019 RESIDENT THEATRE COMPANY

LA JOLLA, CA — La Jolla Playhouse is proud to announce **Backyard Renaissance Theatre Company** as its **2018/2019 Resident Theatre**.

Spearheaded by **Artistic Director Christopher Ashley**, the Playhouse's Resident Theatre Program aims to encourage the artistic development of local performing arts organizations, while advancing and contributing to the San Diego theatre scene as a whole. The program provides a temporary home each year to a local company without a permanent venue, including performance space, lighting and sound support, as well as marketing and development assistance.

"San Diego is such a thriving theatre town, and we are honored to be in a position to offer a year-long residency for one of its many burgeoning companies without a permanent home," said **Ashley**. "Backyard Renaissance more than lives up to its 'art to the gut' mission. Their work during just the three short years since their founding has been extraordinary, and we couldn't be more pleased to host them as our 2018/2019 Resident Theatre Company."

"We are beyond thrilled to be selected as La Jolla Playhouse's 2018 Resident Theatre. The Playhouse has been an artistic role model whose vibrant productions have been an inspiration to us," remarked **Backyard Renaissance Executive Director Jessica John Gercke**. "It is a dream for our young company to treat our loyal audiences to a heightened theatrical experience, and we look forward to introducing our work to a new base of theatre lovers."

During their residency, Backyard Renaissance will present the San Diego premiere of ***Smokefall*** by Noah Haidle, to run **August 23 – September 16** in the Playhouse's Theodore and Adele Shank Theatre. Change is in the air as Violet prepares to bring twin boys into the world. Inside her womb, her unborn sons contemplate their future, while the world around her is in transformation: her husband is secretly planning to leave her, her father is slipping into senility and her daughter has taken a vow of silence. Haunting and slyly funny, *Smokefall* explores the lives of this family in a lyrical treatise on the fragility of life and the power of love. Tickets and information are available at backyardrenaissance.com/.

The Resident Theatre Program is part of La Jolla Playhouse's overall commitment to fostering artistic relationships and the development of new work. The Playhouse seeks to nurture both established and up-and-coming playwrights, directors, designers and performers who are impacted by – and who, in turn, impact – our culture. By offering these artists resources and opportunities, such as the Artist-in-Residence program, DNA New Work Series, commissions, readings, workshops, as well as our signature Page To Stage Play Development Program, we can ensure the Playhouse will be the place to look for what's next in American theatre.

Previous resident theatre appointees include Mo'olelo Performing Arts Company, Moxie Theatre, San Diego Asian American Repertory Theater, Eveoke Dance Theatre, Teatro Máscara Mágica, Circle Circle dot dot and Native Voices.

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Backyard Renaissance presents theatre with an “art to the gut” sensibility and believes that exceptional storytelling is rooted in a sense of joyful play, human connection, and gutsy intensity. The company was founded in 2015 by artistic director Francis Gercke and executive director Jessica John Gercke. With the addition of producing director Anthony Methvin, the company has produced six productions including the San Diego Premiere of *Parlour Song* by Jez Butterworth, *The Elephant Man* by Bernard Pomerance, the San Diego Premiere of *Gutenberg: The Musical* by Scott Brown and Anthony King, *Abundance* by Beth Henley, the San Diego Premiere of *Bachelorette* by Leslye Headland, and the world premiere of *Tarrytown* by Adam Wachter, which was named Best Original Musical by the San Diego Critics Circle Awards this past February.

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

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