

LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE ANNOUNCES FINAL TWO PRODUCTIONS AND RUN DATES FOR 2019/2020 SEASON

WORLD-PREMIERE OF KEITH BUNIN'S PLAYHOUSE-COMMISSIONED *THE COAST STARLIGHT* AND NEW MUSICAL *FLY*, FROM ARTISTS BEHIND *HAMILTON*, *IN THE HEIGHTS* AND *BENGAL TIGER AT THE BAGHDAD ZOO*, ROUND OUT NEW SEASON

La Jolla, CA – La Jolla Playhouse is pleased to announce the final two productions for its 2019/2020 season, including the world premiere of the Playhouse-commissioned ***The Coast Starlight***, by **Keith Bunin** (Playhouse's Without Walls production of *Sam Bendrix at the Bon Soir*), directed by **Tyne Rafaeli** (Off-Broadway's *Usual Girls*). Developed during the Playhouse's 2018 DNA New Work Series, *The Coast Starlight* will run **August 20 – September 15** in the Sheila and Hughes Potiker Theatre.

The Playhouse will also mount the new musical ***Fly***, based on the novel *Peter Pan* by J.M. Barrie, with book by Pulitzer Prize finalist **Rajiv Joseph** (Playhouse's *Guards at the Taj*, Broadway's *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo*), music by Tony, Emmy and Grammy Award winner **Bill Sherman** (orchestrations for *In the Heights*); lyrics by Obie Award winner **Kirsten Childs** (*The Bubbly Black Girl Sheds Her Chameleon Skin*) and **Rajiv Joseph**, directed by multiple Tony Award-winning producer **Jeffrey Seller** (*Hamilton*, *Rent*, *Avenue Q*, *In the Heights*). *Fly* will run **February 18 – March 29, 2020** in the Mandell Weiss Theatre.

"It is a pleasure to welcome back Keith Bunin with his rich and rewarding piece – commissioned by the Playhouse – that follows a desperate young man who encounters a group of equally lost travelers aboard the iconic Coast Starlight train," said **Artistic Director Christopher Ashley**. "And rounding out the season, a truly dynamo creative team will imbue fresh life into the beloved Peter Pan tale, with a new twist on what it means to leave your childhood behind."

Fly and *The Coast Starlight* join the previously-announced 2019/2020 season productions of ***Put Your House in Order***, running June 2 – 30; ***The Luckiest***, running June 30 – July 28; ***Kiss My Aztec!***, running September 3 – October 13; and ***Cambodian Rock Band***, running November 12 – December 15. Tickets to the new season are currently available through a subscription purchase at LaJollaPlayhouse.org or by calling **(858) 550-1010**.

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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 – including the current hit musical *Come From Away* – garnering a total of 38 Tony Awards, as well as the 1993 Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre. For more information, visit LaJollaPlayhouse.org.

About the 2019/2020 Season

Put Your House in Order

By Ike Holter

Directed by Lili-Anne Brown

June 2 – 30

Mandell Weiss Forum

Caroline and Rolan's first date ends up at Caroline's home in an upscale Chicago suburb. But when the city around them begins exhibiting signs that something is terribly wrong, they have to learn to trust each other to stand a chance against the horrors outside her backyard gate. Equal parts romantic comedy and old-school thriller, this new play from one of Chicago's hottest playwrights explores new beginnings at the end of the world.

The Luckiest

By Melissa Ross

Directed by Jaime Castañeda

June 30 – July 28

Sheila and Hughes Potiker Theatre

Lissette is a vibrant and fiercely independent young woman. But when a sudden diagnosis shatters her world into pieces, she finds herself at odds with her mother and her best friend, who each come bearing strong opinions wrapped in good intentions. With an overwhelming amount of choices to make in a very short amount of time, Lissette is forced to navigate between the two while unflinchingly forging her own path for her future. Developed during the Playhouse's 2018 DNA New Work Series, this tender, funny and keenly-observed play explores the uncertain and sometimes heartbreaking territory of how we choose to take ownership of our lives.

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The Coast Starlight

By Keith Bunin

Directed by Tyne Rafaeli

August 20 – September 15

Sheila and Hughes Potiker Theatre

One morning, a young man boards the Coast Starlight, the long-distance train that runs from Los Angeles to Seattle. He's got a secret that can land him in terrible trouble, and he has roughly one thousand miles to enlist the help of his fellow travelers – all of whom are reckoning with their own choices in search of a way forward. Keith Bunin's new play is a smart, funny and compassionate story about our capacity for invention and re-invention when life goes off the rails.

The Berkeley Repertory Theatre Production of

Kiss My Aztec!

Book by John Leguizamo and Tony Taccone

Music by Benjamin Velez

Lyrics by David Kamp, Benjamin Velez and John Leguizamo

Based on a screenplay written by John Leguizamo and Stephen Chbosky

Directed by Tony Taccone

September 3 – October 13

Mandell Weiss Theatre

When the Spanish set their sights on Mesoamerica and its riches, they will destroy anyone and anything that keeps them from conquering and claiming it all for themselves. But the Aztecs are like, "Hell, no!" This fresh, irreverent and outrageous satire could only spring forth from the insanely hilarious mind of John Leguizamo, last seen at the Playhouse in his acclaimed one-man show *Latin History for Morons*. Featuring a fusion of bolero, hip hop, merengue and rap, *Kiss My Aztec!* celebrates, elevates and commemorates Latinx culture in an uproarious new musical.

Cambodian Rock Band

By Lauren Yee

Featuring songs by Dengue Fever

Directed by Chay Yew

November 12 – December 15

Sheila and Hughes Potiker Theatre

A "fierce, gorgeous and heartwarming" (*Los Angeles Times*) play/rock concert, *Cambodian Rock Band* thrusts us into the life of a young woman trying to piece together her family history 30 years after her father fled Cambodia. Featuring a cast that performs a mix of contemporary Dengue Fever hits and classic Cambodian oldies, playwright and UC San Diego MFA alumna Lauren Yee brings to vivid life the Cambodian rock scene of the '60s and '70s, a movement cut short by the Khmer Rouge's brutal attempt to erase the music (and musicians) once and for all. This is a story about survivors, the resilient bond of family and the enduring power of music.

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Fly

Based on the novel *Peter Pan* by J.M. Barrie

Book by Rajiv Joseph

Music by Bill Sherman

Lyrics by Kirsten Childs and Rajiv Joseph

Directed by Jeffrey Seller

February 18 – March 29, 2020

Mandell Weiss Theatre

Two major Tony Award-winning Broadway veterans team up with two of the most exciting writers in American theatre today to bring a cherished tale into the present. Wendy's life is about to change forever when she meets a boy named Peter, a pirate named Hook, and a beguiling, beautiful Crocodile, who's much more than meets the eye. In this thrilling, funny, dangerous look at JM Barrie's novel *Peter Pan*, a whole new Neverland comes to life. *Fly* will take audiences on an adventure propelled by a powerful and percussive score, dynamic choreography and aerial acrobatics.

Artist Bios

Keith Bunin (Playwright, *The Coast Starlight*) is very happy to return to La Jolla Playhouse, where his play *Sam Bendrix at the Bon Soir* was produced in 2012. His plays *The Busy World Is Hushed*, *The Credeaux Canvas* and *The World Over* all premiered Off-Broadway at Playwrights Horizons. His other plays include *The Unbuilt City* (New York Stage and Film), *The Principality of Sorrows* (Pure Orange Productions) and the musical *10 Million Miles* (Atlantic Theatre Company). He wrote the screenplay for the film *Horns* and was a writer for the HBO series *In Treatment*. He is currently writing screenplays for MGM, Universal, HBO Films and Fox Searchlight. He lives in Brooklyn.

Kirsten Childs' (Co-Lyricist, *Fly*) credits include *The Bubbly Black Girl Sheds Her Chameleon Skin* (Obie, Kleban, Audelco, Richard Rodgers, Gilman Gonzalez-Falla Awards; Rockefeller and Jonathan Larson Grants; and Lortel, NAACP, Drama Desk Award nominations); *Bella: An American Tall Tale* (Frederick Loewe Award, Edward M. Kennedy Prize Finalist, 4 Audelco Awards); *Washington Square* with Ben Wexler; New Group commission with Gordon Greenberg; *Funked Up Fairy Tales*; *Miracle Brothers*. Lucky Boy Penn State Commission; NEA, Larson grants; American Songbook series; New Electric Company; Disney's *Believe* and Disney's *Wishes*. Guggenheim Museum Works & Process. Dramatists Guild Council member. Songwriter for Dianne Reeves (with Billy Childs).

Rajiv Joseph (Librettist/Co-Lyricist, *Fly*) play *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo* was a 2010 Pulitzer Prize finalist for Drama and also awarded a grant for Outstanding New American Play by the National Endowment for the Arts. He has twice won the Obie Award for Best New American Play, first in 2016 with *Guards at the Taj* (also a 2016 Lortel Winner for Best Play) and then, in 2018, for *Describe the Night*. Other plays include *Archduke*, *Gruesome Playground Injuries*, *Animals Out of Paper*, *The Lake Effect*, *The North Pool* and *Mr. Wolf*. Joseph has been awarded artistic grants from the Whiting Foundation, United States Artists and the Harold & Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust. He is a board member of the Lark Play Development Center in New York City, and a company member of the Steppenwolf Theatre in Chicago. He served for three years in the Peace Corps in Senegal and now lives in Brooklyn, NY.

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Tyne Rafaeli (Director, *The Coast Starlight*) is a New York-based director of new plays, classics and musicals. Recent productions include Ming Peiffer's *Usual Girls* at Roundabout Theater Company (*New York Times* Critics' Pick), Craig Lucas' *I Was Most Alive with You* at Playwrights Horizons (*New York Times* Critics' Pick), Martyna Majok's *Ironbound* and the world premieres of Anna Ziegler's *Actually* and Amanda Peet's *Our Very Own Carlin McCullough* at Geffen Playhouse, Michael Yates Crowley's *The Rape of the Sabine Women* at The Playwrights Realm, and the New York premiere of *In a Word* by Lauren Yee which was a *New York Times* Critics' Pick. Her work has also been seen at Classic Stage Company, Cal Shakes, Roundabout Theatre Company, Atlantic Theater Company, Two River Theater, PlayMakers Rep, New York Stage & Film, Goodspeed, Juilliard, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Great Lakes Shakespeare Festival, American Players Theatre, Idaho Shakespeare Festival, and the O'Neill Playwright's Conference. Tyne is a 2016-18 Time Warner Directing Fellow at the Women's Project Theater and received the 2014 SDC Sir John Gielgud Fellowship for Classic Direction.

Jeffrey Seller (Director, *Fly*) is the winner of four Tony Awards for Best Musical: *Rent* (1996), *Avenue Q* (2004), *In the Heights* (2008) and *Hamilton* (2015). He also produced and/or developed *De La Guarda* (1998), Andrew Lippa's *The Wild Party* (2000), Baz Luhrmann's direction of Puccini's *La Bohème* (2002), *High Fidelity* (2006), the Broadway revival of *West Side Story* (2009), Sting's *The Last Ship* (2014), and this season's *The Cher Show*. Seller, along with former business partner Kevin McCollum, created the first Broadway lottery for *Rent*, which, for 22 years, has been a popular way to see Broadway shows, often in the first two rows, at an affordable price. He is the only producer to have produced two Pulitzer Prize-winning musicals – *Rent* and *Hamilton*. Seller directed the first production of *Fly* at Dallas Theatre Center in 2013 and *The Man in the Ceiling*, by Jules Feiffer and Andrew Lippa, at the Bay Street Theater in 2017. In 2018, he served as executive producer of the NBC series *Rise*, based on Michael Sokolove's book, *Drama High*. Seller grew up in Oak Park, Michigan and is a proud graduate of the University of Michigan.

Bill Sherman (Composer, *Fly*) won the 2008 Tony Award for Best Orchestrations for *In the Heights* and the 2008 Grammy Award as the co-producer of the *In the Heights* Original Broadway Cast Album. He also won the 2011 Emmy Award for Outstanding Original Song-Children's and Animation for *Sesame Street*'s "What I Am" and the 2014 Emmy Award for Outstanding Original Song-Children's and Animation for *Sesame Street*'s "The Power of Yet," as well as the 2018 Emmy Award for Outstanding Original Song-Children's and Animation for *Sesame Street*'s "A Song About Songs" featuring Sia. He was also nominated for a 2009 Emmy Award for Outstanding Original Main Title Theme Music for AMC's "Storymakers." Sherman is the Music Director of *Sesame Street*, *The Electric Company* and *Nature Cat* on PBS and HBO as well as *Julie's Greenroom* on Netflix. Recently, he produced the *Hamilton* Original Broadway Cast Album with The Roots for Atlantic Records, for which he won a 2016 Grammy Award. He also composed the music for *All Things Must Pass*, a documentary about the rise and fall of Tower Records directed by Colin Hanks. He was also the Music Supervisor for the Discovery Channel series "Hello, World!" He is a co-host of Questlove Supreme on Pandora with Ahmir Thompson of the Roots and Phonte Coleman of Little Brother. He is a proud member of NY's premier hip-hop, improv and comedy group, Freestyle Love Supreme that traveled to the Aspen, Edinburgh, Melbourne and Montreal comedy festivals. He is a graduate of Wesleyan University.

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