

LA  
JOLLA  
PLAY  
HOUSE

# 2024/25 SEASON IMPACT REPORT







Front Cover: The cast of *The Ballad of Johnny and June*; photo by Rich Soublet II.  
Inside Cover: Carmen Cusack, Saycon Sengbloh, and Naomi Tiana Rodgers in *3 Summers of Lincoln*; photo by Rich Soublet II.

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# LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE MISSION & VALUES

## MISSION STATEMENT

La Jolla Playhouse advances theatre as an art form, telling stories that inspire empathy and create a dialogue toward a more just future. With our intrepid spirit and eclectic, artist-driven approach we will continue to cultivate a local, national and global following with an insatiable appetite for audacious work. We provide unfettered creative opportunities for a community of artists of all backgrounds and abilities. We are committed to being a permanent safe harbor for unsafe and surprising work, offering a glimpse of the new and the next in American theatre.

## VALUES STATEMENT

At La Jolla Playhouse, we believe that stories enhance the human experience, instill **empathy** and help us see the world in new ways. We **respect** all races, ethnicities, cultures, physical/cognitive abilities, ages, genders and identities, and endeavor to be an anti-racist and **accessible** organization that removes barriers to engagement. As a community of life-long learners who celebrate the spirit of **play**, we **innovate** and **collaborate** to bring theatre to life.

We practice **empathy** by listening, challenging our assumptions and staying open to all perspectives.

We **respect** and recognize the complexities of all lived experiences, identities and cultural backgrounds. We honor the Kumeyaay Nation, the original caretakers of the land on which our theaters sit. We will fight against anti-blackness, the many forms of racism directed at BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) and all types of discrimination and harassment, to be a more inclusive space where everyone feels welcome onstage and off. We work with our community to identify, understand and address ways to make our theatre more equitable and **accessible**.

We infuse the spirit of **play** into everything we do, sparking creativity, fun and life-long learning.

We **innovate** and take risks to propel theatre as an art form and as a pathway toward fostering belonging and enhancing human connection.

We **collaborate** by prioritizing inclusive practices from which diverse voices, talents and ideas can strengthen engagement and creative thinking.

We vow to grow and embrace these values. When we falter, we will hold ourselves accountable through transparent communication, measurable outcomes, self-reflection and humility. With great joy and a strong sense of responsibility, we commit to these values in every aspect of our work.



(Top) Sasha Velour in *Velour: A Drag Spectacular*; photo by Rich Soublet II.

(Bottom) Miles G. Jackson (left) and Marco Barricelli in *Your Local Theater Presents A Christmas Carol*, by Charles Dickens, *Again*; photo by Rich Soublet II.





(Top) Christopher Ryan Grant and Patti Murin with the cast of *The Ballad of Johnny and June*; photo by Rich Soublet II.



(Bottom) Ashley Alvarez and Caro Guzmán in *Derecho*; photo by Rich Soublet II.

## A MESSAGE FROM LEADERSHIP

Our 2024/25 Season was marked by extraordinary artistic achievements and renewed connections with our audiences. We reflect on the dynamic and challenging time we are in and are grateful for the support of our audiences, donors, staff, and board who join us in creating the new and the next in American theatre.

The six works of the 2024/25 Subscription Season (*The Ballad of Johnny and June*; *Derecho*; *Velour: A Drag Spectacular*; *Primary Trust*; *Your Local Theatre Presents: A Christmas Carol*, by Charles Dickens, *Again*; and *3 Summers of Lincoln*) reached almost 100,000 attendees and addressed the monumental moments of our lives. These stories explored the sources of meaning in our lives and the deepest connections we forge. Our annual WOW Festival, held at UC San Diego—a key, ongoing partner in arts and innovation—highlighted the immersive and site-specific work of local, national, and international artists.

More than 21,000 students—including youth, interns, teachers, and adult community learners—participated in our Learning & Engagement initiatives this season. Additionally, the POP Tour, *The Weather Busters of Beachcastle*, reached more than 10,000 students and teachers. Our Military & Veterans Programs (the MVP Initiative) extended more than 400 complimentary tickets to military personnel, veterans, and their family members in San Diego.

Our commitment to bringing timely and impactful stories to San Diego remains steadfast in our 2025/26 Subscription Season, already underway, and in planning the 2026/27 Subscription Season. With your support, we will continue to grow and build our capacity to make theatre accessible to all and joyously impact the community we serve.

Thank you for your commitment to La Jolla Playhouse.

**Christopher Ashley**  
The Rich Family Artistic Director  
of La Jolla Playhouse

**Debby Buchholz**  
Managing Director  
of La Jolla Playhouse





# YOUR IMPACT

## OVERALL REACH

224

17

5

276

PERFORMANCES IN  
2024/25 SUBSCRIPTION  
SEASON

PLAY READINGS

WORKSHOPS  
OF NEW WORKS

ARTISTS HIRED

## TICKETS DISTRIBUTED

99,968

SUBSCRIPTION SEASON

16,224

WOW FESTIVAL

2,127

MVP INITIATIVE

## ONLINE REACH

Tracking online reach from April 1, 2024 - March 31, 2025

f 2,409,199

(72.44% increase from the year before)

2,988,477

(224.44% increase from the year before)

in 135,286

(334.29% increase from the year before)

538,060

## LEARNING & ENGAGEMENT REACH

14,627

TOTAL CHILDREN

803

TOTAL TEACHERS

6,419

TOTAL OBSERVERS

21,849

TOTAL INDIVIDUALS

19,815

TOTAL CHILDREN  
POINTS OF CONTACT

1,021

TOTAL TEACHER  
POINTS OF CONTACT

6,021

TOTAL OBSERVERS  
POINTS OF CONTACT

26,857

TOTAL POINTS  
OF CONTACT

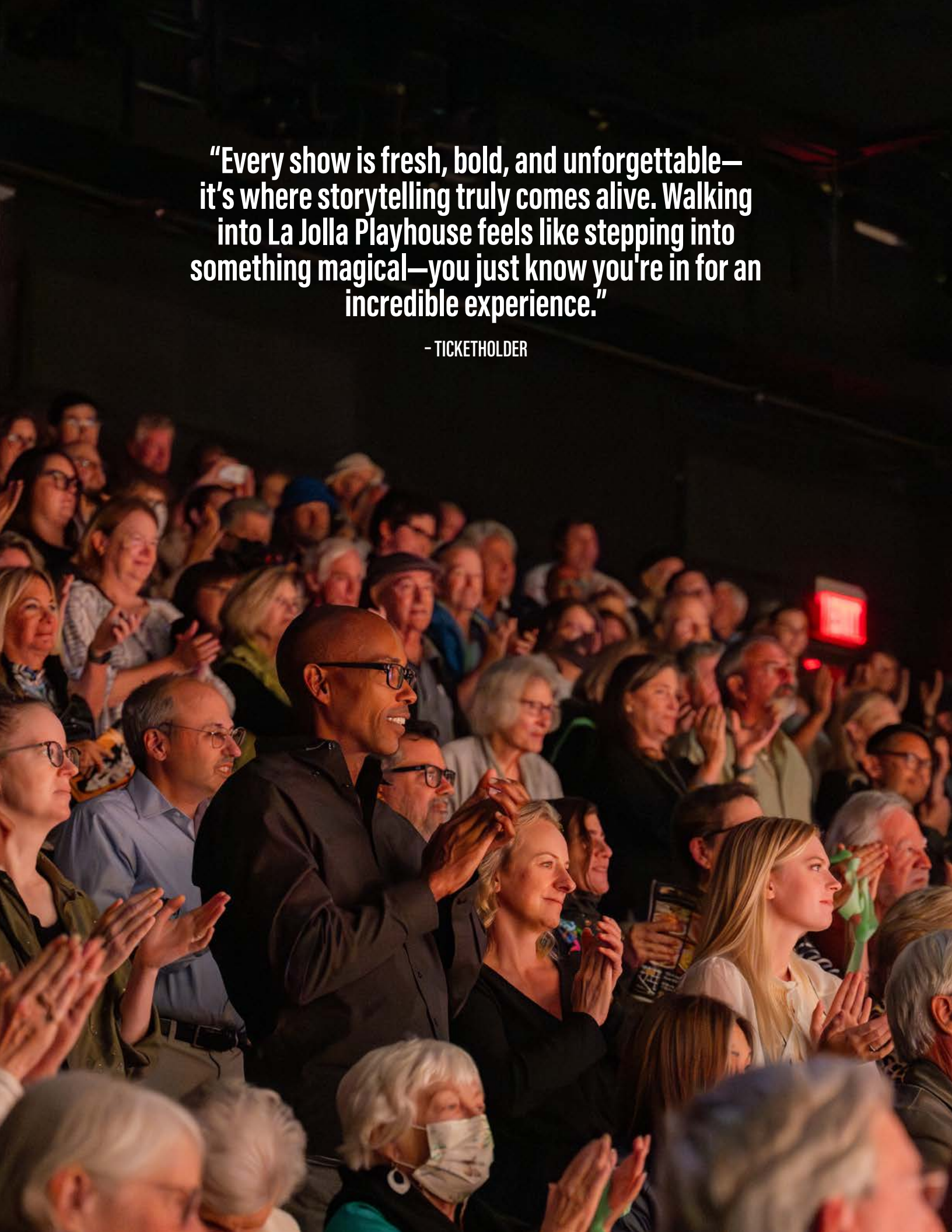
532

TOTAL # SESSIONS

7684.57

TOTAL # HOURS INCLUDING INTERNS





**"Every show is fresh, bold, and unforgettable—it's where storytelling truly comes alive. Walking into La Jolla Playhouse feels like stepping into something magical—you just know you're in for an incredible experience."**

**- TICKETHOLDER**

## **COMMUNITY TESTIMONIALS**

**"What a joy to be blessed with a 'date' night filled with the beauty of the outdoors, delicious food, military community, inspiring news about the arts and a thought-provoking play that fostered great conversation! We appreciate your thoughtfulness in caring for military marriages and families."**

**- MILITARY NIGHT OUT ATTENDEE**

**"Our students benefited from the entire experience. [We] provide opportunities for students to engage in Readers' Theater and small classroom performances; however, we do not have the resources to provide the sets, sound, and level of professionalism that La Jolla Playhouse brings."**

**- POP TOUR PARTICIPATING SCHOOL PRINCIPAL**

**"Thank you so much for your support for our theater program! This program has become one of our top programs on campus for quality and size—75+ students annually. That's over 10% of our school population! The quality of the last two shows has been higher than any other middle school productions I've seen, and I've seen a lot in my 20+ years as an administrator."**

**- JUMPSTART THEATRE PROGRAM PARTICIPATING SCHOOL PRINCIPAL**

**"Emotionally, veterans often have a hard time transitioning back into civilian society after serving. The VPW cohort is extremely important for it has served as a vehicle to rekindle that natural bond of camaraderie that exists amongst veterans. This further fuels the veterans' playwriting ability; for it is coming from an emotional and empathic state of mind. For me, I've watched this process in action every week and it has kept me emotionally connected to the very essence of all people, particularly, the veteran. It is cathartic and healing on all levels."**

**- VICTOR, VETERANS PLAYWRITING WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT**





Caleb Eberhardt and Rebecca S'manga Frank in *Primary Trust*; photo by Rich Soublet II.

## CREATIVE PROGRAMMING

The Playhouse is dedicated to fostering the growth of new artistic works and emerging artists, while also providing opportunities for the industry's foremost playwrights, directors, actors, and designers. With a commitment to providing unfettered creative opportunities for a community of artists of all backgrounds and abilities, each season showcases captivating stories that inspire meaningful discussions and harness the transformative power of theatre.

### SUBSCRIPTION SEASON

Bookending the Subscription Season were two world-premiere musicals: *The Ballad of Johnny and June*, directed by Des McAnuff and centering on the iconic relationship and beloved music of Johnny Cash and June Carter; and *3 Summers of Lincoln*, directed by Christopher Ashley, which chronicled the transformative bond between Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. The season also included three world-premiere plays: *Derecho*, the 11th show to come out of our DNA New Work Series, about two siblings pushing against each other within the confines of family traditions and political tensions; *Velour: A Drag Spectacular*, for which we partnered with Moisés Kaufman and Tectonic Theater Project to tell the incredible story of ever-rising star Sasha Velour; and *Your Local Theater Presents: A Christmas Carol, by Charles Dickens, Again*, a sharp, funny and warmhearted backstage take on the classic holiday play. Making its West Coast premiere was the sublimely tender, Pulitzer Prize-winning off-Broadway play *Primary Trust*.

#### ***The Ballad of Johnny and June***

Book by Robert Cary and Des McAnuff  
Music and Lyrics by Johnny Cash, June Carter, and others  
Directed by Des McAnuff  
World-Premiere Musical  
May 28 to July 7, 2024

#### ***Derecho***

By Noelle Viñas  
Directed by Delicia Turner Sonnenberg  
World-Premiere Play  
July 23 to August 18, 2024

#### ***Velour: A Drag Spectacular***

By Sasha Velour and Moisés Kaufman  
Starring Sasha Velour  
Directed by Moisés Kaufman  
A Co-Production with Tectonic Theater Project  
World-Premiere Play  
August 13 to September 15, 2024

#### ***Primary Trust***

By Eboni Booth  
Directed by Knud Adams  
West Coast-Premiere Play  
September 24 to October 20, 2024

#### ***Your Local Theater Presents: A Christmas Carol, by Charles Dickens, Again***

By Anna Ouyang Moench  
Directed by Les Waters  
World-Premiere Play  
November 19 to December 15, 2024

#### ***3 Summers of Lincoln***

Book by Joe DiPietro  
Lyrics by Daniel J. Watts and Joe DiPietro  
Music by Crystal Monee Hall  
Directed by Christopher Ashley  
World-Premiere Musical  
February 18 to March 30, 2025



WITHOUT WALLS (WOW) PROGRAMMING

Without Walls (WOW) is La Jolla Playhouse's dynamic, site-specific performance program that includes the annual WOW Festival and stand-alone productions, moving art outside theatre walls and into unique spaces. From a car to a bar, from a beach to a basement, WOW invites audiences of all ages to interact with artists and art in unexpected ways, bringing people together and reimagining what storytelling can be.

Since its founding in 2011, Without Walls has become a highly acclaimed and popular performance program in the San Diego region and beyond. Under the WOW umbrella, the Playhouse has presented and produced more than 175 projects, including nine stand-alone WOW projects, eight city-wide WOW Festivals, and 14 digital WOW pieces.

Our annual WOW Festival and stand-alone WOW projects bring people together to reimagine the traditional relationship between artist and audience. With innovation at its core, WOW celebrates vibrant connections with fearless and fun activations that electrify our community.

WOW FESTIVAL

The WOW Festival brings diverse voices from various locations to enrich the cultural landscape of San Diego and provide low- and no-cost transformative artistic experiences. Last year’s festival took place April 24-27, 2025 on the campus of UC San Diego and welcomed the following pieces and presenters:

International

- Bring Back the Happening* – Nineties Productions (Netherlands)
- Burnout Paradise* – Pony Cam (Australia)
- FIREBIRD* – Touki Delphine (Netherlands)
- I SEE YOU LIKE THIS* – Jessica Wilson (Australia)
- Marcel Lucont: Les Enfants Terribles* (UK)
- Marcel Lucont’s Whine List* (UK)
- Summer Break* – Flip Fabrique (Canada)

National

- Black Benatar’s Audience Lip Sync Spectacular* – Beatrice Thomas (San Francisco, CA)
- Black Benatar’s Black Magic Variety Hour\** – Beatrice Thomas (San Francisco, CA)
- Escape the Box* – Wishing Horse Productions (Austin, TX)
- How to Put On a Sock\** – Rachel Karp (Brooklyn, NY)
- THE JUMP UP!* – Sandbox Percussion (Brooklyn, NY)
- The Society of Historic Sonic Happenings* – UP CLOSE Projects (New York, NY)

Local (San Diego)

- American Dream Casino\** – Robert Farid Karimi
- Artists Everywhere* – Playwrights Project
- Bev and Blanche’s Care-a-Van* – Esty Bharier and Molly Maslak
- Creation Station* – La Jolla Playhouse
- Goldilocks Screentime* – UC San Diego Theatre & Dance
- Green Memories* – Memo Atkin and Shahrokh Yadegari
- Layers* – Circus Center
- ODDISEA: A Puppet Procession* – Animal Cracker Conspiracy & Chunky Hustle Brass Band
- Shifting Horizons* – San Diego Unified High School
- Tale Travelers\** – Blindspot Collective
- The Weather Busters of Beachcastle* – La Jolla Playhouse
- when my body talks* – Danniell Ureña

\*World Premiere

WOW STAND-ALONE PROJECT

*The Unfair Advantage* – Created and performed by Harry Milas  
February 25 to April 20, 2025 (*Sold-out run—extended three times!*)  
Each performance, 35 audience members joined Harry in a small rehearsal room as he demonstrated how magicians, card cheaters, and mentalists fool the world.



*Summer Break* by Flip Fabrique at WOW Festival 2025; photo by Jenna Jo Photography.



*ODDISEA: A Puppet Procession* by Animal Cracker Conspiracy and Chunky Hustle Brass Band at WOW Festival 2025; photo by Jenna Jo Photography.



# UPLIFTING THE NEW AND THE NEXT IN AMERICAN THEATRE INITIATIVE



Reading of *A Black-billed Cuckoo*  
at DNA New Work Series 2024;  
photo by Samantha Laurent.

La Jolla Playhouse invests significant resources to “provide unfettered creative opportunities for artists of all backgrounds and abilities” by commissioning and developing “unsafe and surprising” new work from emerging and established artists. The Playhouse has mounted 120 world premieres and commissioned 70 new works, demonstrating our commitment to sharing new voices and contemporary stories.

The Playhouse uplifts diverse new works and voices in the following ways:

**(1) Our commissioning and development programs are as robust as ever, with two dozen artists currently under commission.** We have plays under commission by writers such as Todd Almond, Jeff Augustin, Fernanda Coppel, Matt Gould, Kenneth Lin, Mona Mansour, Lisa Peterson, Theresa Rebeck, Claudia Shear, Octavio Solis, Jonathan Spector, Keith Wallace, Kristina Wong, and Lauren Yee. Additionally, we have commissioned two new musicals by writers of color: one by Benjamin Velez and Harrison David Rivers, and another by Connie Lim (aka MILCK), Adrienne Gonzalez, Sam Chanse and Jess McLeod called *The Family Album*. This new musical was developed in workshops throughout 2023 and 2024, and is scheduled for our upcoming 2026/2027 Subscription Season.

**(2) The DNA New Work Series provides essential developmental opportunities to artists whose works are in the earliest stages through rehearsal time, space, and dramaturgy.** Public readings engage audiences in conversation about the plays and provide vital feedback to artists. Featuring a balance of diverse, emerging and established playwrights, 11 plays from the DNA series have gone on to have full productions at the Playhouse.

**(3) The Artist-In-Residence program is an opportunity spanning multiple months, allowing artists to focus on their ongoing body of work.**

La Jolla Playhouse has had the honor of working with Dr. Maria Patrice Amon, acclaimed local director, producer, and scholar. Dr. Amon produced the 2024 Latinx New Play Festival, where four plays reflecting a range of Latinx experiences were brought to the Playhouse stage. Dr. Amon’s mission is to utilize her artistic practice to create opportunities to employ and highlight underrepresented artists, particularly strong BIPOC women. Dr. Amon partnered with the Playhouse as her laboratory to create honest and audacious works such as Oliver Mayer’s *The Man in the Maze* and her very own piece, *On Her Shoulders We Stand*.



Top: Dr. Maria Patrice Amon; Bottom: Voices of Our City Choir Theatre Workshop participants.

**(4) More than two decades of partnership continued with Native Voices at the Autry, the resident theatre company at the Autry Museum of the American West in Los Angeles, to share Indigenous stories with the San Diego community.** In 2024, the Playhouse hosted two free-of-charge festivals of new works by Native American, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, and First Nations playwrights. The Short Play Festival consists of professional staged readings of 10-30-minute plays, centered around a particular theme. The Festival of New Plays provides emerging and established Native artists the opportunity to see their full-length works brought to life by renowned directors, dramaturgs, and actors.

**(5) In 2024/25 we continued our partnership with Voices of Our City Choir, which helps San Diego’s unsheltered population reconnect with hope and possibility through the healing power of music, along with other resources.**

The Playhouse provides free, bi-monthly theatre workshops to Choir members to help them develop their storytelling skills to share their personal stories through song.

Playhouse teaching artists led 26 workshops and provided food and transportation for each one. Dozens of participants attend each workshop, with many attending multiple times.

Choir member Christopher Edmond shared his passion and gratitude:

**“La Jolla Playhouse are amazing people and you have provided me with a venue. I belong on stage, and with the right education and right people, my dreams are coming true. I thank you guys so much. Some things in life are still yet priceless.”**



# LEARNING & ENGAGEMENT

This season, our Learning & Engagement programs impacted more than 21,000 students, including elementary, middle, and high-school students, interns, K-12 teachers, and adult community learners.

## TECHNICAL THEATRE TRAINING

In partnership with San Diego County Office of Education’s Juvenile Court and Community Schools, La Jolla Playhouse offers Technical Theatre Training to incarcerated, homeless, foster, and other disadvantaged youth. Small groups of high school students come to the Playhouse for intensive sessions of learning and gain a creative outlet for expressing themselves academically and personally, new skills in the arts and STEM subjects, an understanding of opportunities in the professional theatre industry, and a positive experience with mentors. **In Summer 2024, we served 28 students from East Region Community School, 37ECB, and Bayfront Charter.**

“Those three days at La Jolla Playhouse have taught me that there is [value] in what I love. Not just for my own fulfillment, but for others.”

## JUMPSTART THEATRE

This program establishes sustainable musical theatre programs in middle and high schools that previously lacked such capabilities. Over the course of three years, the program provides comprehensive professional development to new arts educators, empowering them to guide their students in producing an annual musical at their school. Three teachers from each participating school are taught the techniques and skills to develop and manage a musical theatre program (everything from casting, to rehearsal schedules, to staging/choreography and technical requirements, to cultivating parent/community engagement, to achieving economic sustainability) through a series of two, full-day professional development “bootcamps” each year of the three-year program, plus ongoing mentoring/coaching with an experienced Playhouse teaching artist. JumpStart students and teachers also attend an annual mini-conference for deeper hands-on learning opportunities and collaboration.

**In 2024/25, JumpStart Theatre served 472 students and 30 teachers at the following schools:** Year 1 Cohort: John Muir Language Academy, Madison High School; Year 2 Cohort: Longfellow K-8; Year 3 Cohort: Challenger and Marston middle schools; Graduated Cohort: Innovation, Montgomery, Los Coches Creek, Knox, and De Portola middle schools.

## EDUCATOR AND STUDENT MATINEES

We were delighted to welcome students and educators free of charge to three of our Subscription Season productions: *Primary Trust*; *Your Local Theater Presents: A Christmas Carol*, by Charles Dickens, Again; and *3 Summers of Lincoln*. **Through these matinee performances, we had the pleasure of reaching 2,236 students and 117 teachers. To enhance student engagement, we hosted exclusive educator preview nights for each production.** These evenings served as valuable opportunities for teachers to participate in professional learning sessions and gain insight into the shows, allowing them to better prepare their students for the performance. A participating educator shared their appreciation:

“Again you have opened the eyes of students who have seen live theatre for the first time. Students saw themselves in *Primary Trust* where vulnerable characters demonstrated empathy and kindness. There is not enough of this in the world today. I have been so fortunate to have seen students walk into the theatre and walk out completely transformed with inspiration. [...] The Playhouse makes young people feel welcome at the theatre—these are the audiences of tomorrow!”

A field trip to La Jolla Playhouse has changed relationships between classmates. I have noticed students are more participatory, more engaged, and tapped into a sense of wonder that I did not see before the trip. My effusive message may sound dramatic—so be it! Thank you for the gift of theatre for my students!”



## SPOTLIGHT ON

This comprehensive series of classes is designed specifically for adults seeking to explore and deepen their understanding of professional theatre techniques. Our diverse class offerings include Musical Theatre Dance Styles, Intro to Improv, Writing the 10-Minute Play, Contemporary Scene Study, Intro to Acting, Scene into Song, Musical Theatre Ensemble, Developing a New Play, and Audition Technique. Each class is thoughtfully designed to cater to different interests and skill levels, ensuring that participants can find the perfect fit for their theatrical journey.

**We reached and engaged with a total of 119 lifelong learners through Spotlight On this year.**

## LEVEL UP SAN DIEGO

In partnership with the San Diego Foundation and the San Diego Unified School District, La Jolla Playhouse led students in grades 4-8 through a fun and exciting summer of creating a musical theatre performance together. Students participated in ensemble-building theatre exercises to act, sing, dance, and even help create the sets, props, and costumes to perform in a show at the end of the summer for friends and family. **The 52 participating students from Knox, Logan Memorial, and Dana middle schools made new friends and supported each other through making live theatre.** When we asked students, “Do you feel more connected to your peers after participating in this program,” a common refrain among the responses was, “Yes, I feel like we can have a good time without stressing out because we are supporting each other.”





## PERFORMANCE OUTREACH PROGRAM (POP) TOUR

For more than three decades, La Jolla Playhouse has commissioned and toured original plays for young audiences, bringing them to schools, libraries, and community centers. These productions offer an unforgettable introduction to theatre for many students, creating a lasting impression and igniting a passion for the arts. To prepare students for the experience, the Playhouse provides educators with expertly crafted lesson plans and the option to invite a Playhouse teaching artist to conduct a preshow workshop, helping to set the stage for a meaningful and engaging encounter with live performance.

### THE WEATHER BUSTERS OF BEACHCASTLE

By Christin Eve Cato  
Directed by Kat Yen

In the California town of Beachcastle, unsettling and bizarre weather patterns have forced residents to grapple with questions and heartache. When 12-year-old Jayce and her tech-savvy best friend, Kori, meet a mysterious explorer from beyond the stars, they discover their own extraordinary talents can impact the fate of their community forever. Together, they embark on a journey that blends curiosity with courage, uncovering their power to make a meaningful difference.



The POP Tour visited schools across San Diego County from March 3 through May 2, 2025, and included two public performances at UC San Diego on April 26 and 27 during the 2025 WOW Festival.

### Throughout the run of the POP Tour, the program reached:

- **52 schools and 2 community sites**
- **41 Title 1 schools**  
(at least 40% of students qualify for free/reduced meals)
- **10,208 students**
- **464 other observers**
- **65 performances**

Opposite page, top left: (L-R) Giancarlo Lugo, Jamaelya Hines, and Mikaela Rae Macias in *The Weather Busters of Beachcastle*; photo by Jenna Jo Photo. Bottom left: (L-R) Mikaela Rae Macias, Jamaelya Hines, Giancarlo Lugo, and Maybelle Shimizu in *The Weather Busters of Beachcastle*; photo by Jenna Jo Photo. Above: Thank you note from a student at Cabrillo Elementary.



# MILITARY AND VETERANS PROGRAMS—THE MVP INITIATIVE

Alexander Ameen and Daryl "Scooter" Davis at the Veterans Playwriting Workshop reading event.

Below: Military Night Out attendees



The military community plays an important role in San Diego, and La Jolla Playhouse has created dedicated, free-of-charge programs to enhance the quality of life for veterans, servicemembers, and their families. Our MVP Initiative connects, inspires, and entertains through programs like the Veterans Playwriting Workshop (VPW), Military Nights Out, Military Families at WOW, arts learning programs targeted to children in military families, and military-themed artistic programming. These experiences allow members of the military community to find meaningful avenues of self-expression and to spend quality time with loved ones through enriching arts activities, without the barriers of cost.

## VETERANS PLAYWRITING WORKSHOP

The Veterans Playwriting Workshop offers a transformative experience that fosters a sense of community and healing for former military personnel. Participants collaborate with teaching artists, who are veterans themselves, over several weeks to shape and share their stories. The program consists of three distinct levels (Beginner, Intermediate, and Development) and participants are welcome to take these sections as many times as desired.

VPW is an inclusive program, provided free-of-charge to participants, including veterans, military personnel, spouses, and national interpreters. Additionally, the readings and performances are free to attend. We recruit participants through our partnerships with military organizations, Military Nights Out, and local VA referrals. VPW is also offered both in-person and online via Zoom, granting greater flexibility and accessibility to participants and enabling the involvement of individuals from various locations.

In September 2024, we held our first Development phase, where two participants were each selected to develop a one-act play through a one-week workshop. This process culminated in a public reading for **125 audience members** at the Playhouse's Shank Theatre.

**44 individuals participated in Veterans Playwriting Workshop during the 2024/25 season.**

## MILITARY NIGHTS OUT

With a preshow reception and complimentary tickets for a Playhouse performance, Military Nights Out create magical moments of reconnection for members of the military and their families. Together, loved ones create new memories, helping to make up for some of the holidays and celebrations they have missed over the years. With in-kind support from the Gary Sinise Foundation for five of the six events, the Playhouse was able to provide enhanced meal options and important resources for attendees.

**The Playhouse served 427 military personnel, veterans, and their family members during Military Nights Out this season.**

## MILITARY FAMILIES AT WOW

In recognition and appreciation of the San Diego military community, our 2025 WOW Festival at UC San Diego hosted two Military Appreciation Mixers on Saturday and Sunday, April 26 and 27. Attendees were able to enjoy free lunch and drinks at our WOW Club Lounge. **These events were attended by a total of 128 military personnel, veterans, and their family members.**

## BLUE STAR TICKETS

La Jolla Playhouse welcomes US military personnel, spouses, and children, as well as US veterans with \$30 tickets available for most shows.

**We distributed 1,700 Blue Star tickets during our 2024/25 season, subsidizing more than \$100,000 in ticket costs.**





# DEVELOPING THE NEXT GENERATION OF THEATRE PROFESSIONALS INITIATIVE

La Jolla Playhouse Interns  
Summer 2024 cohort



We believe that sustainable change toward becoming a more equitable, accessible, anti-racist, and inclusive theatre requires pathways for students and emerging professionals to receive training, mentorship, career opportunities, and space for community building with peers. Programs include Internships, Directing Fellowship, Observerships, Playhouse Teen Council, Playhouse Leadership Council, staff affinity groups, and intentional hiring practices.

The goal of this initiative is to develop the next generation of theatre professionals and create an inclusive workforce that is reflective of San Diego County. Our target population for this program is current and aspirational theatre professionals who reflect the variety of cultures, backgrounds, and intersectional identities within our communities, particularly underrepresented; Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC); and socio-economically diverse populations.

This spectrum of programs creates opportunities for more candidates to engage with the Playhouse by offering positions and interactions with varying amounts of time commitment and requiring different levels of previous experience in the industry.

## PAID INTERNSHIPS

We pride ourselves in representing diverse voices onstage and in our staff. The Playhouse offers internships in all artistic and administrative departments, for developing professionals to gain industry experience by learning side-by-side with extraordinary artists, administrators, and technicians.

Our undergraduate, graduate, and early/new-career interns are paid minimum wage during the program, which is centered on educational benefits to interns. Interns gain valuable on-the-job experience, learning directly from La Jolla Playhouse staff and leadership.

**In 2024/25, we served 17 college students and early/new-career professionals through our Internship program, who contributed over 6,400 hours to our general operations.**

## DIRECTING FELLOWSHIP

In 2022, La Jolla Playhouse created a two-year Fellowship for an early-career director to embed in the Artistic Department—working on many productions and projects, and ultimately directing one of our Subscription Season shows. The Directing Fellow receives a salary and healthcare benefits. During the application process we received and reviewed 90 submissions and interviewed 10 finalists. Kat Yen was selected as our first Directing Fellow, working at the Playhouse from January 2023 through December 2024. During her fellowship, she worked as associate director on *The Untitled Unauthorized Hunter S. Thompson Musical* and *Redwood*, as well as staged her own full-scale production of the Rodgers and Hammerstein rarity *Pipe Dream* for Berkshire Theatre Group. Kat also directed the 2025 POP Tour production *The Weather Busters of Beachcastle*.

As the capstone of her Fellowship, Kat is the director of *All the Men Who've Frightened Me* by Noah Diaz in our 2025/26 Subscription Season.

## PLAYHOUSE TEEN COUNCIL

La Jolla Playhouse strongly believes in uplifting the youth voices of our diverse San Diego community. Teen Council members learn the inner workings of a nonprofit professional theatre and attract young audiences and positively contribute to our community's theatre culture. Members participate in seminars with Playhouse staff; complete projects; attend Playhouse shows, workshops, and talkbacks; and learn about the artistic vision of the Playhouse. Teen Council members also coordinate events that celebrate the Playhouse and each member's love of theatre, including Teen Nights hosted during various Subscription Season productions.

**The Playhouse served 24 members of the Teen Council in 2024/25 and invited 100 other teens to Teen Nights for two Subscription Season productions.**



Left: Participants at 3 Summers of Lincoln Teen Night  
Right: La Jolla Playhouse Interns - 2024/25 Academic Year cohort.





# 2024/25 SEASON DONORS & SPONSORS

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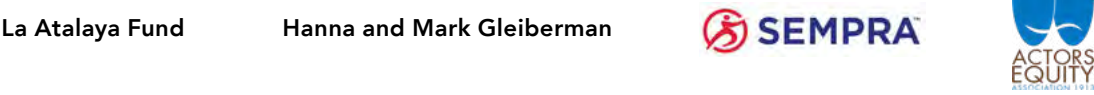


(L-R) Becky Goodman, Karen Zobell, Deirdre Alpert, Barbara ZoBell, Bridget Cavaiola Stone, Elizabeth Taft, Debby Buchholz, Michael Alpert, and Keely Daximillion attend an in-school POP Tour performance.

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Members of the Playhouse Legacy Circle believe strongly in La Jolla Playhouse’s mission and have included the Playhouse in their estate plans through gifts in their wills, trusts, retirement accounts, and other estate-planning vehicles. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to these donors whose foresight and generosity help secure a thriving future for live theatre in San Diego.

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*List as of May 2025*

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We are fortunate to have the support of so many people in the community, including those who give their time by volunteering with us. Thank you to our devoted volunteers. Your energy and generosity of spirit enrich every corner of the Playhouse and make our work possible.

## LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Playhouse Board of Trustees is a dedicated group of community leaders who volunteer their time, expertise, and resources to guide the organization’s vision and ensure its long-term health. Their commitment goes far beyond governance. Trustees are champions of our mission, advocates for the transformative power of theatre, and generous supporters who help make our work possible.

This past season, the Board provided invaluable leadership as we navigated strategic initiatives, deepened community engagement, and expanded access to the arts. Their insight and support help the Playhouse thrive as both a cultural institution and a community resource. We are profoundly grateful for their service, passion and steadfast belief in the impact of theatre.

## PLAYHOUSE LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

The Playhouse Leadership Council (PLC) is a cross-cultural partnership of community leaders who work directly in their communities to increase awareness of theatre and to help overcome geographic, economic, and perceptive barriers to accessing live theatre in San Diego. Working with Playhouse staff, PLC creates a welcoming and inclusive environment, builds and nurtures relationships with new audiences, and has fun!

**The Playhouse Leadership Council co-chairs for the 2024/25 season were Mary Coleman and Bena Leslie.**

## PLAYHOUSE PARTNERS

For 35 years, the Playhouse Partners have been offering their time in voluntary service to the Playhouse. They help answer phones, sort mail, distribute hearing devices to patrons at shows and provide a homemade meal for actors at our Tech Dinner on the final Saturday in rehearsal before previews.

**The President of the Playhouse Partners for the 2024/25 season was Susan Gembrowski Baker.**

**In 2024/25, Playhouse Partners donated a total of 4,968 hours valued at \$199,415.52.**



# LEADERSHIP AND STAFF

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# HISTORY OF THE PLAYHOUSE



Founded in 1947 by Gregory Peck, Dorothy McGuire, and Mel Ferrer, La Jolla Playhouse thrived as a summer stock retreat for such Hollywood luminaries as Vivian Vance, Groucho Marx, and Eve Arden. After over a decade of performances featuring numerous greats from stage and film, the Playhouse went on hiatus from 1959–1982. While shuttered, a handful of dedicated supporters fought to keep the Playhouse alive, eventually working to revive it on the campus of UC San Diego in 1983.

Over the next three decades, La Jolla Playhouse rose to prominence as one of the most celebrated regional theatres in the country. Under the artistic leadership of Des McAnuff (1983–1994; 2001–2007), the Playhouse developed dozens of new works, many of which transferred to Broadway, including *Big River*, *The Who's Tommy*, and *Jersey Boys*. In 1993, the Playhouse was awarded the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre.

This period also saw the beginning of the Playhouse's acclaimed Performance Outreach Program (POP) Tour, in which a brand new, Playhouse-commissioned work brings the magic of theatre into San Diego schools. The Playhouse continued its commitment to

developing new plays and musicals with the launch of its Page To Stage New Play Development Program, spawning the Pulitzer Prize-winning *I Am My Own Wife*.

Led for the last 18 years by 2017 Tony Award winner Christopher Ashley, the Playhouse has solidified its reputation of originating new work, producing a total of 120 world premieres and sending 37 productions to Broadway—including the Tony Award-winning musical *The Outsiders*.

Deepening the Playhouse's connection to the San Diego community, Christopher Ashley inaugurated the Resident Theatre Program in 2008, providing a temporary home each year for an up-and-coming theatre company. In 2011, he spearheaded the innovative Without Walls (WOW) series of site-inspired and immersive theatre. The Playhouse hosts an annual WOW Festival featuring local and international artists in vibrant, interactive experiences that amplify the energy of the city.

From its signature play development initiatives to its intriguing and playful WOW programming, La Jolla Playhouse has become the place to see what's next on the American theatre landscape.