## LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE ANNOUNCES CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM FOR AS YOU LIKE IT

PRODUCED IN ASSOCIATION WITH DIVERSIONARY THEATRE, RE-IMAGINED SHAKESPEARE CLASSIC TO BE CO-DIRECTED BY CHRISTOPHER ASHLEY AND WILL DAVIS, FEATURING A COMPANY OF TRANS, NON-BINARY AND QUEER PERFORMERS

La Jolla, CA – La Jolla Playhouse announces the cast and creative team for its production of **As You Like It**, by **William Shakespeare**, co-directed by Tony Award winner **Christopher Ashley**, the Rich Family Artistic Director of La Jolla Playhouse, and Helen Hayes Award winner **Will Davis**. Produced in association with **Diversionary Theatre**, As You Like It will run **November 15 – December 11** (press opening: November 20) in the Playhouse's Sheila and Hughes Potiker Theatre. For tickets and information, please visit **LaJollaPlayhouse.org**.

The cast features Jess Barbagallo as "Silvius," Rachel Crowl as "Duke Frederick/Corin," Esteban Andres Cruz as "Hymen," Alanna Darby as "Phoebe," David Greenspan as "Duke Senior/Adam," Esco Jouléy as "Orlando," TaiReikca L.A. as "Oliver," Rami Margron as "Jaques," Jen Richards as "Celia," T. Carlis Roberts as "Musician," Cody Sloan as "Touchstone," Peter Smith as "Rosalind" and UC San Diego MFA candidate Taiwo Sokan, as part of the ensemble, along with Allison Husko and Kai Justice Rosales as understudies.

The creative team includes: **Emmie Finckel**, Scenic Designer; **Mel Ng**, Costume Designer; **Cha See**, Lighting Designer; **ien DeNio**, Sound Designer; **T. Carlis Roberts**, Music Director and Arranger; **Regina Victor**, Dramaturg; **Chelsea Pace**, Intimacy and Fight Staging; **Caparelliotis Casting** (David Caparelliotis, CSA/Joe Gery) and **Jacole Kitchen**, Casting; **Charles Means**, Stage Manager and **Matthew Bantock**, Assistant Stage Manager.

Featuring a cast of trans, non-binary and Queer performers, Christopher Ashley and Will Davis's re-imagined *As You Like It* is a celebration of limitless love and humanity. In Shakespeare's classic romantic comedy, Rosalind and Orlando meet by chance in court and have an immediate connection. When they are both banished, fate brings them together again in the Forest of Arden. Far from the restrictions of court life, we find ourselves in a vibrant new world, where identities can be fully explored and romance can blossom in multiple forms. This bold and beautiful production inhabits a wonderful, 'gender-ful' world – a sensuous place that embraces the full spectrum of gender possibilities. Evoking the heady experience of falling in love, and underscored by heart-thumping live music, there are no boundaries in *As You Like It*, just endless complexities, infinite love and the joyful expression of true selves.

"What a privilege it is to work with acclaimed director Will Davis, our amazing producing partners at Diversionary Theatre, and this astonishingly talented company. We couldn't ask for a better group to bring Shakespeare's enduring work to joyous life," said **Ashley**. "As You Like It inherently embodies an irrepressible spirit of playfulness and an exploration of love, gender and self-discovery."

Tony Award winner Christopher Ashley has served as La Jolla Playhouse's Artistic Director since 2007. During his tenure, he directed the world premieres of Come From Away, Diana: The Musical, Memphis, Escape to Margaritaville. The Squirrels, A Dram of Drummhicit, Restoration and Chasing the Song, as well as His Girl Friday, Glengarry Glen Ross, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Freaky Friday and Xanadu. He also spearheaded the Without Walls (WOW) initiative, the DNA New Work Series and the Resident Theatre program. Mr. Ashley recently directed Come From Away for AppleTV+ and Diana: The Musical for Netflix. Other screen credits include the feature films Jeffrey and Lucky Stiff, and the American Playhouse production of Blown Sideways Through Life for PBS. Mr. Ashley's Broadway credits include Come From Away (Tony and Outer Critics Circle Awards), Diana: The Musical, Escape to Margaritaville, Memphis (Tony Award nomination), Xanadu, Leap of Faith (Drama Desk Award nomination), All Shook Up and The Rocky Horror Show (Tony, Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle Award nominations). He also helmed productions of *Come From Away* in London (Olivier Award nomination), Toronto, Australia and on national tour. Other national tours include Escape to Margaritaville, Memphis, Xanadu, All Shook Up and Seussical: The Musical. Additional New York stage credits include Blown Sideways Through Life. Jeffrey (Lucille Lortel and Obie Awards), The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told, Valhalla (Lucille Lortel Award nomination), Regrets Only, Wonder of the World, Communicating Doors, Bunny, The Night Hank Williams Died and Fires in the Mirror (Lucille Lortel Award), among others. Mr. Ashley is the recipient of the Princess Grace Award, the Drama League Director Fellowship and an NEA/TCG Director Fellowship.

Will Davis is a transgender director and choreographer focused on physically adventurous work for the stage. Off-Broadway credits include: *Road Show* (Encores! Off-Center); *India Pale Ale* (MTC); *Bobbie Clearly* (Roundabout Underground); *Charm* (MCC); *Men on Boats* (Clubbed Thumb and Playwrights Horizons—Lucille Lortel nomination); and *Duat* (Soho Rep). Regional credits include: *Spamtown, USA* (Children's Theater Company); *Everybody* (Shakespeare Theatre Company); *A Doll's House, Part 2* (Long Wharf Theatre); *The Carpenter* (The Alley Theatre); *Colossal* (Olney Theatre Center, Mixed Blood Theater – Helen Hayes Award for best direction); *Evita* (Olney Theatre Center—Helen Hayes Award nomination); and multiple productions for ATC in Chicago, where Davis also served as Artistic Director. He is an alum of the Soho Rep Writer/Director Lab, the NYTW 2050 Directing Fellowship, the Brooklyn Art Exchange's Artist in Residence program, and is currently a Princeton Arts Fellow.

**Diversionary Theatre** is the nation's third-oldest LGTBQ+ theatre dedicated to amplifying queer voices through the performing arts in a dynamic, inclusive, and provocative environment that celebrates and preserves their unique culture, while contributing to an environment of diversity and inclusion throughout the broader community. Since Diversionary's founding in 1986, it has continually provided an inspiring and thought-provoking theatrical platform to explore complex and diverse stories of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning communities in the form of live entertainment that can be enjoyed by all.

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. Founded in 1947 by Gregory Peck, Dorothy McGuire and Mel Ferrer, the Playhouse is currently led by Tony Award winner Christopher Ashley, the Rich Family Artistic Director of La Jolla Playhouse, and Managing Director Debby Buchholz. The Playhouse is internationally renowned for the development of new works, including mounting 108 world premieres, commissioning 60 new works, and sending 33 productions to Broadway – among them the hit musical *Come From Away* – garnering a total of 38 Tony Awards, as well as the 1993 Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre.

## **FACT SHEET**

WHAT: As You Like It

By William Shakespeare

Co-Directed by Christopher Ashley and Will Davis Produced in association with Diversionary Theatre

WHEN: November 15 – December 11 (Press Opening: November 20 at 7pm)

Tue/Wed at 7:30pm; Thu/Fri/Sat at 8pm; Sun at 7pm; Sat/Sun at 2pm

WHERE: Sheila and Hughes Potiker Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse

2910 La Jolla Village Drive, La Jolla, CA 92037

WHO: Scenic Design: Emmie Finckel Costume Design: Mel Ng

Lighting Design: Cha See Sound Design: ien DeNio

Wig Design: Alberto Alvarado

Dramaturg: Regina Victor

Casting: Caparelliotis Casting, Jacole Kitchen

Music Director/Arranger: T. Carlis Roberts

Intimacy/Fight Staging: Chelsea Pace

Stage Manager: Charles Means

Assistant Stage Manager: Matthew Bantock

Cast: Silvius Jess Barbagallo

Duke Frederick/Corin Rachel Crowl

Hymen Esteban Andres Cruz

Phoebe Alanna Darby Duke Senior/Adam David Greenspan Orlando Esco Jouléy Oliver TaiReikca L.A. Jaques Rami Margron Celia Jen Richards Musician T. Carlis Roberts Touchstone Cody Sloan Rosalind Peter Smith Ensemble Taiwo Sokan

Understudies Allison Husko, Kai Justice Rosales, Taiwo Sokan, Regina Victor

**SPONSORS:** Denise & Lon Bevers; Sheri L. Jamieson; Karen & Jeff Silberman; Morrison Foerster

TICKETS: (858) 550-1010; <u>LaJollaPlayhouse.org</u>

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