

LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE ANNOUNCES FOUR POTENT PRODUCTIONS FOR 2019/2020 SEASON

Put Your House in Order

World Premiere

By Ike Holter

Directed by Lili-Anne Brown

The Luckiest

World Premiere

By Melissa Ross

Directed by Jaime Castañeda

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

Cambodian Rock Band

By Lauren Yee

Featuring Songs by Dengue Fever

Directed by Chay Yew

La Jolla, CA — La Jolla Playhouse announces four productions for its 2019/2020 season, including the world premieres of ***Put Your House in Order*** by **Ike Holter**, directed by **Lili-Anne Brown**, and ***The Luckiest***, by **Melissa Ross**, directed by former Playhouse Associate Artistic Director **Jaime Castañeda**, developed as part of the Playhouse's 2018 DNA New Work Series. The season will also include the Berkeley Repertory Theatre production of ***Kiss My Aztec!***, book by **John Leguizamo** (Playhouse's *Latin History for Morons*) and **Tony Taccone**, music by **Benjamin Velez**, lyrics by **David Kamp**, **Benjamin Velez** and **John Leguizamo**, directed by **Tony Taccone**, based on a screenplay by **John Leguizamo** and **Stephen Chbosky**; and ***Cambodian Rock Band***, by UC San Diego MFA graduate **Lauren Yee**, featuring songs by the acclaimed Cambodian-American band **Dengue Fever**, directed by **Chay Yew**. Two additional productions and run dates for the 2019/2020 season will be announced shortly. Tickets are currently available only through a subscription purchase at LaJollaPlayhouse.org or by calling **(858) 550-1010**.

"The 2019/2020 season showcases four riveting new pieces that represent a multitude of vibrant and vigorous voices, all of which examine – in vastly different ways – how ordinary people attempt to persevere under extraordinary circumstances," noted **Artistic Director Christopher Ashley**. "John Leguizamo and Tony Taccone's new musical takes us back to the 16th century in a savagely funny and deeply-irreverent piece about the Aztec resistance to the Spanish conquistadores; rising Chicago playwright Ike Holter's *Put Your House in Order* is a witty, suspenseful cross between a romantic comedy and apocalyptic thriller; Melissa Ross's *The Luckiest* – developed during our 2018 DNA New Work Series – paints a moving picture of a young woman attempting to re-take control of her life in the face of a serious illness; and UC San Diego MFA alumna Lauren Yee's *Cambodian Rock Band* is a redemptive and rocking story of a father and daughter finding each other amidst decades-old secrets."

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About the 2019/2020 Season

Put Your House in Order

By Ike Holter

Directed by Lili-Anne Brown

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

Lisette 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, Lisette 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.

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

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

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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Artist Biographies

A native Chicagoan, **Lili-Anne Brown** (Director, *Put Your House in Order*) works as a director, actor and educator, both locally and regionally. She will be directing the world premiere of *Lottery Day*, the ultimate play in Ike Holter's Rightlynd Saga, this spring at the Goodman Theatre. The former artistic director of Bailiwick Chicago, she directed *Dessa Rose* (Jeff Award), *Passing Strange* (BTA Award), *See What I Wanna See* (Steppenwolf Theatre Garage Rep) and the world premiere of *Princess Mary Demands Your Attention* by Aaron Holland, while producing several other award-winning shows during her tenure. Other directing credits include *Caroline, or Change* (Firebrand Theatre), *Tilikum* by Kristiana Colon (world premiere, Sideshow Theatre), *Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story* (American Blues Theatre, Jeff Award), *Hairspray* (Skylight Music Theatre), *The Wolf at the End of the Block* (16th Street Theatre), *Marie Christine* (Boho Theatre), *Peter and the Starcatcher* (Metropolis Performing Arts), *The Wiz* (Kokandy Productions; BroadwayWorld Award), *Xanadu* (American Theatre Company), *Jabari Dreams of Freedom* by Nambi E. Kelley (world premiere, Chicago Children's Theatre), *American Idiot* (Northwestern University), the national tour of *Jesus Snatched My Edges*, and *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Hairspray*, *Unnecessary Farce*, *Cabaret*, *Sweet Charity*, and *The 25th...Spelling Bee* at Timber Lake Playhouse. She is a member of SDC, AEA, SAG-AFTRA, and a graduate of Northwestern University.

Jaime Castañeda (Director, *The Luckiest*) served as La Jolla Playhouse's Associate Artistic Director from 2014 to 2018, where he directed Will Power's *Seize the King*, Rachel Bonds' *At the Old Place*, Mike Lew's *Tiger Style!* and Rajiv Joseph's *Guards at the Taj*. Other productions include *Vietgone* (American Conservatory Theatre), *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity* by Kristoffer Diaz (Dallas Theater Center), *Chimichangas and Zoloft* by Fernanda Coppel (Atlantic Theater Company), *How We Got On* by Idris Goodwin (Cleveland Playhouse), *The Royale* by Marco Ramirez (American Theater Company), *Welcome to Arroyo's* by Kristoffer Diaz (The Old Globe) and *Red Light Winter* by Adam Rapp (Perseverance Theatre). He has also developed new plays with the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, Rattlestick Theater, Portland Center Stage, Denver Center Theater, The Kennedy Center and the Atlantic Theater Company, where he spent five seasons as Artistic Associate. A Drama League Fellow, Castañeda is the recipient of a Princess Grace Award and a TCG New Generations Grant. He holds an M.F.A. in Directing from The University of Texas at Austin.

Ike Holter (Playwright, *Put Your House in Order*) is a 2017 winner of the Windham-Campbell Prize, one of the highest awards for playwriting in the world. Holter is a resident playwright at Victory Gardens Theater, and has been commissioned by The Kennedy Center, The Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, South Coast Rep and The Playwrights' Center. He has upcoming productions in Chicago at the Goodman Theatre, Victory Gardens and Steep Theatre. His work has been previously produced at the Steppenwolf Garage, The Philadelphia Theater Company, Off Broadway at Barrow Street and Cherry Lane, The Lily Tomlin Center in L.A, True Colors in Atlanta, Forward Theater in Wisconsin, Water Tower Theater in Dallas, 3oaks in Michigan, and Jackalope, Teatro Vista, A Red Orchid and The Inconvenience in Chicago. He is the artistic director of The Roustabouts and is a regular performer at Salonathon in Chicago.

David Kamp (Co-Lyricist, *Kiss My Aztec!*) is an author, journalist and humorist. A longtime contributor to *Vanity Fair*, he has profiled such figures as Johnny Cash, Sly Stone, Lucian Freud, Bruce Springsteen, Randy Newman and the Brill Building songwriters. Among his books are *The United States of Arugula*, a best-selling chronicle of America's foodways; *I Must Say*, Martin Short's best-selling memoir (as co-author); and four volumes of humor. His work also appears regularly in *The New York Times*. He began his career at *Spy*, the legendary satirical monthly. He lives in New York City.

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Multi-faceted performer and Tony and Emmy Award winner **John Leguizamo's** (Co-Librettist/Co-Lyricist, *Kiss My Aztec!*) work spans the genres of film, theatre, television, literature and beyond. As writer and performer, John created the off-Broadway sensation *Mambo Mouth* (1991; Obie, Outer Critics Circle, Vanguardia Awards). His second one-man show, *Spic-O-Rama* (1993), enjoyed extended sold-out runs in Chicago and New York (Dramatists' Guild Hull-Warriner Award for Best American Play, Lucille Lortel Outstanding Achievement Award for Best Broadway Performance, Drama Desk Award for Best Solo Performance). His third solo show, *Freak*, completed a successful run on Broadway in 1998. A special presentation of *Freak*, directed by Spike Lee, aired on HBO (Emmy Award for Outstanding Performance in a Variety or Music Program and nomination for Outstanding Variety, Music or Comedy Special). In 2001 John returned to Broadway with *Sexaholix...a Love Story*, directed by Peter Askin (Outer Critics Circle Award nomination for "Outstanding Solo Performance" and Tony Award nomination for Best Special Theatrical Performance). *Sexaholix* aired as an HBO Special in 2002 and toured widely. His most recent one-man shows, *Ghetto Klown* and *Latin History for Morons*, were developed at La Jolla Playhouse (also developed at Berkeley Rep as *Klass Klown*) and went on to Broadway runs in 2011 and 2017, respectively. His graphic novel *Ghetto Klown* was nominated for a 2016 Eisner Award. In 2018 Leguizamo was given a special Tony Award for *Latin History for Morons*.

Melissa Ross (Playwright, *The Luckiest*) plays include *Thinner Than Water*, *A Life Extra Ordinary*, *Nice Girl*, *An Entomologist's Love Story* and *Of Good Stock*. *Thinner Than Water* and *Nice Girl* were both originally produced by LAByrinth Theater Company. *Thinner Than Water* is included in the anthology "New Playwrights: Best Plays of 2011" by Smith and Kraus. *Nice Girl* was a finalist for the Francesca Primus Prize and is in Applause's *Best Plays of 2015*. *Of Good Stock* received its world premiere at South Coast Repertory as a part of the Pacific Playwrights Festival followed by a subsequent production at Manhattan Theatre Club. *A Life Extra Ordinary* premiered with The Gift Theatre. *An Entomologist's Love Story* is an Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Commission and an Edgerton New Play Award recipient and received its world premiere at San Francisco Playhouse. Ross' plays have been developed and produced around the country at theaters including: Dorset Theatre Festival, The Gift Theatre, Iama Theatre Company, Kitchen Dog Theater, LAByrinth Theater Company, LCT3, La Jolla Playhouse, Manhattan Theatre Club, New York Stage and Film, The New Group, Raven Theatre, South Coast Repertory, Rattlestick Playwrights Theater, Summer Shorts and TheatreWorks Palo Alto. She is twice commissioned by both South Coast Repertory and Manhattan Theatre Club. Ross is a graduate of Bennington College and the Lila Acheson Wallace Playwriting Program at The Juilliard School, a two-time winner of the Le Comte de Nouy Prize and a proud member of LAByrinth Theater Company.

After more than 30 years at Berkeley Rep, **Tony Taccone** (Co-Librettist/Director, *Kiss My Aztec!*) is celebrating his final season with the company. During his tenure as artistic director, the Tony Award-winning nonprofit has earned a reputation as an international leader in innovative theatre. In these years, Berkeley Rep has presented more than 70 world, American and West Coast premieres and sent 24 shows to New York, two to London, and one to Hong Kong. He has staged more than 40 plays in Berkeley, including new work from Julia Cho, John Leguizamo, Daniel Handler, Culture Clash, Rinde Eckert, David Edgar, Danny Hoch, Geoff Hoyle and Itamar Moses. He directed the shows that transferred to London, *Continental Divide* and *Tiny Kushner*, and three that landed on Broadway: *Bridge & Tunnel*, *Wishful Drinking* and *Latin History for Morons*. Prior to Berkeley Rep, Taccone served as artistic director of Eureka Theatre, which produced the American premieres of plays by Dario Fo, Caryl Churchill and David Edgar before focusing on a new generation of American writers. While at the Eureka, he commissioned Tony Kushner's legendary *Angels in America* and co-directed its world premiere. He has collaborated with Kushner on eight plays at Berkeley Rep, including *The Intelligent Homosexual's Guide to Capitalism and Socialism with a Key to the Scriptures*. His regional credits include Actors Theatre of Louisville, Arena Stage, Center Theatre Group, Guthrie Theater, Huntington Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, OSF, The Public Theater and Seattle Repertory Theatre. As a playwright, he debuted *Ghost Light*, *Rita Moreno: Life Without Makeup*, *Game On*, written with Dan Hoyle, and *It Can't Happen Here*, written with Bennett S. Cohen. In 2012, Taccone received the Margo Jones Award for "demonstrating a significant impact, understanding, and affirmation of playwriting, with a commitment to the living theatre." Most recently, he directed the revival of *Angels in America* at Berkeley Rep.

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Benjamin Velez (Composer/Co-Lyricist, *Kiss My Aztec!*) is a composer/lyricist, a Miami native, and Columbia University graduate, where he studied film and wrote the 114th Annual Varsity Show "Morningside Hates." He has been a member of the BMI workshop since 2010 and won the Jerry Harrington Award for Outstanding Creative Achievement in 2012. His original musical [Afterland](#) has been workshopped at the Yale Institute for Musical Theater in 2014 and had a reading at the York Theater in 2016, both directed by Mark Brokaw. Two of his short musicals have been presented by 4@15: *Mars One* as a collaboration with the NYU Steinhardt School of Music in 2015, and *Anyone But Gio* with the University of California Irvine in 2016. His music has been featured at NYMF, Joe's Pub, Cutting Edge Composers, the Civilians, 54 Below, Compose Yourself and the York Theater, where he had a NEO residency in 2015 – 2016. He was honored to be a 2017 Sundance Artist in Residence at the UCROSS Foundation, and in April 2017, he premiered a concert of his music at Ars Nova titled "Seriously Serious," featuring songs from his original musicals. He is currently developing several new projects, including a musical about Young Albert Einstein and a musical about Borderline Personality Disorder with Aryanna Garber ([Borderline](#)), which has been selected as the 2018 recipient of the [Weston New Musical Award](#).

Lauren Yee (Playwright, *Cambodian Rock Band*) has written *King of the Yees*, which premiered last season at the Goodman Theatre (Chicago) and Center Theatre Group (LA), followed by productions at ACT Theatre and Canada's National Arts Centre. Her current and upcoming productions include *The Great Leap* at Denver Center for the Performing Arts, Seattle Repertory Theatre and Atlantic Theatre Company; *King of the Yees* (San Francisco Playhouse and Baltimore Center Stage); and *The Song of Summer* (Trinity Repertory Company). Her other plays include *Ching Chong Chinaman* (Pan Asian, Mu Performing Arts), *The Hatmaker's Wife* (Playwrights Realm, Moxie Theatre, PlayPenn), *Hookman* (Encore Theatre, Company One), *In a Word* (San Francisco Playhouse, Cleveland Public Theatre, Strawdog Theatre) and *Samsara* (Victory Gardens Theatre, Chance Theater). Her work is published by Samuel French. Her recent honors include the Kesselring Prize, Francesca Primus Prize, an upcoming Hodder Fellowship at Princeton University and the top two plays on the 2017 Kilroys List (*Cambodian Rock Band* and *The Great Leap*). She is a finalist for the American Theatre Critics Association/Harold Steinberg Award and the Edward M. Kennedy Prize. Yee is a member of the Ma-Yi Writers' Lab and alumna playwright of Playwrights Realm. She has current commissions from Geffen Playhouse, La Jolla Playhouse, Lincoln Center/LCT3, Mixed Blood Theatre, Portland Center Stage and Trinity Repertory. She earned a B.A. from Yale University and an M.F.A. from UC San Diego. laurenyee.com

Chay Yew's (Director, *Cambodian Rock Band*) New York credits include the Public Theater (*Oedipus el Rey*, *Durango*, *Ameriville*, *Low*), Playwrights Horizons (*A Cool Dip in the Barren Saharan Crick*), New York Theatre Workshop (*The Architecture of Loss*), Playwrights Realm (*My Mañana Comes*), Ensemble Studio Theatre (*Where Did We Sit on the Bus?*), National Asian American Theatre Company (*The House of Bernarda Alba*) and Ma Yi Theatre Company (*Last of the Suns*). His regional production credits include Humana Festival, Mark Taper Forum, Goodman Theatre, American Conservatory Theatre, Berkeley Rep, Long Wharf, Huntington Theatre, Oregon Shakespeare Theatre, Denver Center Theater, Kennedy Center, Woolly Mammoth, Cincinnati Playhouse, Portland Center Stage, Playmakers Rep, Cornerstone Theatre Company, Round House Theatre, Geva Theater Center, Northlight Theatre, East West Players, Empty Space, Curious Theatre, Theatre at Boston Court, Pillsbury Theatre, Gala Hispanic Theatre and Singapore Repertory Theatre, among others. Recent credits include Jiehae Park's *Hannah and the Dread Gazebo* at OSF, Karen Hartman's *Roz and Ray* at Seattle Rep and Marcus Gardley's *A Wonder in My Soul* at Victory Gardens. Upcoming productions include the world premieres of Dael Orlandersmith's *The Lady in Denmark* at the Goodman and Boo Killebrew's *Lettie* at Victory Gardens. His opera credits include the world premieres of Osvaldo Golijov's and David Henry Hwang's *Ainadamar* (co-production with Tanglewood Music Center, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts and Los Angeles Philharmonic) and Rob Zuidam's *Rage D'Amors* (Tanglewood). He is a recipient of the Obie Award and a Drama League Award for Direction. An alumnus of New Dramatists, he is the Artistic Director of Victory Gardens Theatre in Chicago.

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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. Renowned for its development of new plays and musicals, the Playhouse has mounted 98 world premieres, commissioned 52 new works, and sent 32 productions to Broadway – among them the currently-running hit musicals *Come From Away* and *SUMMER: The Donna Summer Musical* – garnering a total of 38 Tony Awards, plus the 1993 Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre.

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