

LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE ANNOUNCES CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM FOR 2018 PERFORMANCE OUTREACH PROGRAM (POP) TOUR: *HOME OF THE BRAVE*

*PLAYHOUSE CONTINUES DECADES-LONG TRADITION OF COMMISSIONING WORKS FOR
YOUNG AUDIENCES WITH LEE CATALUNA'S NEW PLAY ABOUT MILITARY FAMILIES*

*PRODUCTION TO TOUR SAN DIEGO COUNTY SCHOOLS JANUARY 29 – MARCH 30; PUBLIC
PERFORMANCES AT THE PLAYHOUSE MARCH 10 & 11*

La Jolla, CA – **La Jolla Playhouse** announces the cast and creative team for its 2018 Performance Outreach Program (POP) Tour production, *Home of the Brave*, by **Lee Cataluna**, helmed by Honolulu Theatre for Youth Artistic Director **Eric Johnson** (2014 POP Tour, *Suzette Who Set to Sea*). **The production will tour schools throughout San Diego County January 29 – March 30, 2018.** Co-commissioned by the Playhouse and Honolulu Theatre for Youth, this world-premiere play for young audiences will also have four public performances on **March 10 & 11, 2018** at **1:00pm** and **3:00pm** in the Playhouse's Rao and Padma Play Development Center.

The cast features **Carolyn Agan** (*Wild Goose Dreams*) as "Jana and others," **Julia Cuppy** as "Jada and others," **Kendrick Dial** as "Marcus and others," and **Taylor Henderson** as "Gina and others." The creative team includes **Lee Cataluna**, playwright; **Eric Johnson**, director; **Sara Ryung Clement**, scenic/costume designer; **Paul James Prendergast**, sound designer; **Shirley Fishman**, dramaturg; and **Kendra Stockton**, stage manager.

Home of the Brave is a collection of scenes and stories depicting the lives of children in military families. This enjoyable new play is inspired by interviews with military children from all branches of the services — officer and enlisted, active duty and veterans — from both Honolulu and San Diego. By sharing experiences common for these remarkable young people, such as frequent relocation and coping with the deployment of a parent, *Home of the Brave* shows the loyalty, humor, fierce pride — as well as the anxiety — that comes with being part of a family that is serving our nation.

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"Living in San Diego County, it is likely that many of us know or have known a military family who has exhibited incredible resilience, patience and courage while a loved one was deployed," said **Playhouse Artistic Director Christopher Ashley**. "It is for this reason I'm beyond proud that the 2018 POP Tour, *Home of the Brave*, brings to light the selfless contributions of military families and conveys with great tenderness and wit the experiences of the children in those families."

"It's really special and exciting that, while the POP Tour continues its 30-plus year commitment to new theatre for young audiences, this year we're focusing on a large portion of our community that can often be underappreciated: the military family," said **Director of Education and Outreach Steve McCormick**. "We're honored that we've been entrusted to share their stories with students through *Home of the Brave* and are looking forward to bringing this play not only to schools but also military bases in San Diego County."

The Playhouse is one of the few theatres in the country that annually commissions world-class artists to create a bold new play for young audiences. Playwrights create an innovative, 45-minute piece that addresses issues in the students' lives. Last year's POP Tour, **#SuperShinySara**, was seen by nearly **20,000** young people, teachers and families.

Introduced in 1987, the POP Tour travels throughout the county, touring schools, libraries and community centers. The set, costumes and props are designed to fit into a 16-foot truck and, in just 60 minutes, can be unloaded, placed in any space and be ready for children to experience. Prior to each performance, a Playhouse teaching artist visits each school to engage students in an interactive workshop to explore issues and themes at the core of the play. The Playhouse also provides schools with a standards-based engagement guide that enables educators to integrate the play into their existing curriculum. After each performance, the cast and crew conduct a question and answer session with the audience.

La Jolla Playhouse offers the **Adopt-A-School** program which provides funding for POP Tour performances at schools that could not otherwise afford it. With the help of the theatre's Education Committee, Playhouse Board members Judy Smith and Barbara ZoBell created the Adopt-A-School program for those who love theatre and feel no child should be without its transformative power. For more information, please contact Samantha Wilson at swilson@ljp.org.

Tickets to the public performances on **March 10 & 11** are now on sale at LaJollaPlayhouse.org. For more information about booking the POP Tour for a school performance, please contact Paola Kubelis at pkubelis@ljp.org.

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BIOGRAPHIES

Lee Cataluna is the metro columnist for the Honolulu Star-Advertiser, Hawaii's largest news organization, and is an award-winning playwright with more than a dozen production credits. Her plays include the musical *You Somebody* written for Tony Award nominee Loretta Ables Sayre and *The Great Kauai Train Robbery*, based on the true story of her great-uncle who was wrongly convicted of Hawaii's only train heist. In 2004 she received the Cades Award for Literature for her body of work. Lee has an MFA in Creative Writing from the University of California, Riverside, and has taught writing both at an elite prep school and in a maximum-security prison. Her favorite stories are about ordinary people struggling to live lives of dignity and purpose.

Eric Johnson is the Artistic Director of Honolulu Theatre for Youth. Prior to Honolulu, Johnson was an Artistic Associate at the Fulton Opera House and the Founding Artistic Director of Blue Shift Theatre Ensemble. His work has toured nationally and internationally winning numerous awards and recognition. As a freelance director Johnson's credits include La Jolla Playhouse, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Center Theatre Group, Childsplay, Imagination Stage and the Kennedy Center New Visions/New Voices Festival. He is a proud alumnus of the TCG/NEA Early Career Directors Program and the Princess Grace Fellowship.

Carolyn Agan ("Jana and others") is a Washington, D.C. transplant who fell in love with San Diego. Previous roles include: Woman in *Wild Goose Dreams* (La Jolla Playhouse), Mother in *Ragtime* (San Diego Musical Theatre; 2016 Craig Noel Award: Lead Actress in a Musical), Olive in *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, Belle in *A Christmas Carol, 1776*, Hello, Dolly!, *Parade*, *Freedom's Song*, *Liberty Smith* (Ford's Theatre), Pinakalicious in *Pinkalicious, The Musical* (Adventure Theatre). She currently serves as the Education Director for San Diego Musical Theatre and as an affiliated Teaching Artist with The Old Globe and La Jolla Playhouse. She is also a proud Navy Brat.

Julia Cuppy ("Jada and others") is an actor, director, and teacher who loves being a part of developing new work for multi-generational audiences. She is also a proud military brat. As an actor, her favorite past projects include playing various roles in Home by Hovercraft's new indie-rock musical *On the Eve*, B.D. Wong's *Mister Doctor*, and an experimental San Diego production of *Into the Woods* as the Baker's Wife. She is also the Associate Director of Education & Outreach at La Jolla Playhouse where she works directly with students and teachers educating them on the creative process. Education: MFA Musical Theatre - San Diego State University, MAT Theatre Education - Southern Oregon University.

www.juliacuppy.com

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Kendrick Dial (“Marcus and others”) is a Navy veteran and artist with a purpose. Utilizing the mediums of theatre, poetry and music, he continues to find ways to balance his mediums artistic expression with meaningful messages understanding self-love, healthy relationships and social justice. He attended SDSU where he received his BA in Africana Studies/Psychology in 2010. In 2013, he graduated from USC with his MSW. His last productions include *Blacktop Sky* (IARP Theatre) and *Ordinary Magic* with Gill Sotu. He currently works as an EOPS counselor at City College, a trainer with the National Conflict Resolution Center, the Culturally Responsive Academy, and a coach the Strengths Finder Consultant Group.

Taylor Henderson (“Gina and others”) is thrilled to be back at the Playhouse working on *Home of the Brave!* She was last seen in the Without Walls Festival productions of *Under Construction* (2017) and *OjO: The Next Generation of Travel* (2015). Other San Diego credits include *All Shook Up* (Moonlight), *A Civil War Christmas* (Diversionary), *Loves and Hours* (SRT), *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* (New Fortune) and *Avenue Q* (Coronado/OB Playhouse). Originally from Las Vegas, she is happy to now call Southern California home. Inspire! Aspire!

The Tony Award-winning **La Jolla Playhouse** is internationally-renowned for creating some of the most exciting and adventurous work in American theatre, through its new play development initiatives, its innovative Without Walls series, artist residencies and commissions. Led by 2017 Tony Award-winning Artistic Director Christopher Ashley and Managing Director Michael S. Rosenberg, the Playhouse was founded in 1947 by Gregory Peck, Dorothy McGuire and Mel Ferrer. La Jolla Playhouse has had 32 productions transfer to Broadway, garnering 38 Tony Awards, among them the currently-running, Tony Award-nominated musical *Come From Away*, *Jersey Boys*, *Memphis*, *The Who’s Tommy*, *Big River*, as well as Billy Crystal’s *700 Sundays* and the Pulitzer Prize-winning *I Am My Own Wife*, both fostered as part of the Playhouse’s Page To Stage Program. Visit LaJollaPlayhouse.org.

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FACT SHEET

WHAT: 2018 Performance Outreach Program (POP) Tour: *Home of the Brave*

By Lee Cataluna

Directed by Eric Johnson

WHEN: Touring Dates: January 29 – March 30, 2018 at schools across San Diego County
Public Performances at the Playhouse: March 10 & 11 at 1:00pm & 3:00pm

CAST: Carolyn Agan: *Jana and others*
Julia Cuppy: *Jada and others*
Kendrick Dial: *Marcus and others*
Taylor Henderson: *Gina and others*

BACKGROUND:

Home of the Brave is a collection of scenes and stories depicting the lives of children in military families. This enjoyable new play is inspired by interviews with military children from all branches of the services — officer and enlisted, active duty and veterans — from both Honolulu and San Diego. By sharing experiences common for these remarkable young people, such as frequent relocation and coping with the deployment of a parent, *Home of the Brave* shows the loyalty, humor, fierce pride — as well as the anxiety — that comes with being part of a family that is serving our nation.

BOOKING: For more information about booking the POP Tour for a school performance, please contact Paola Kubelis at pkubelis@ljp.org. For more information about the Adopt-a-School program, please contact Samantha Wilson at swilson@ljp.org.

WEBSITE: <http://www.lajollaplayhouse.org/pop-tour-2018>

TICKETS: LaJollaPlayhouse.org or (858) 550-1010.
Tickets are \$9 for children 12 and under; \$12 for adults

SPONSORS: La Jolla Playhouse Education & Outreach Programs are supported by the generosity of numerous corporate, government and foundation entities:

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