

LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE ANNOUNCES PROJECTS FOR 2019 DNA NEW WORK SERIES

**PLAYS BY JEFF AUGUSTIN, GUILLERMO CALDERÓN AND EMILY FELDMAN
TO RECEIVE READINGS, ALONG WITH NEW MUSICAL BY MARK MOTHERSBAUGH
AND KYLE JARROW, FEATURING SKATE CHOREOGRAPHY BY
SKATEBOARDING LEGEND TONY HAWK**

La Jolla, CA – La Jolla Playhouse is pleased to bring back for a seventh year its acclaimed play development initiative, the **DNA New Work Series**, a weekend of readings of new works, taking place **May 2 – 5, 2019** in the Playhouse's Rao and Padma Makeneni Play Development Center (PDC) and Seuss 1 rehearsal spaces. Tickets for the DNA New Work Series are free but reservations are required by calling **(858) 550-1010** or visiting LaJollaPlayhouse.org.

This year's projects include the musical ***Slam***, with book by **Kyle Jarrow**, music and lyrics by DEVO band co-founder **Mark Mothersbaugh** (*Rushmore*, *The Royal Tenenbaums*) and Tony Award nominee **Kyle Jarrow** (*SpongeBob SquarePants*), adapted from the novel by Nick Hornby, directed by **Sean Graney**, and featuring skate choreography by skateboarding legend **Tony Hawk**; ***Airport***, written and directed by **Guillermo Calderón** (Playhouse's *Neva*); ***The Best We Could (a family tragedy)***, by UC San Diego MFA graduate **Emily Feldman**, directed by **Kate Eminger**; and ***Jean, Jonah, and the Ginger Karl***, by UC San Diego MFA graduate **Jeff Augustin** (Playhouse's *The Last Tiger in Haiti*), directed by UC San Diego MFA graduate **Joshua Kahan Brody** (Playhouse's *The Last Tiger in Haiti*).

The DNA New Work Series offers playwrights and directors the opportunity to develop a script by providing rehearsal time, space and resources, culminating in a public reading. This process gives audiences a closer look at the play development process, while allowing the Playhouse to develop work and foster relationships with established and up-and-coming playwrights.

"DNA has become one of the Playhouse's most highly-anticipated and successful pathways for developing new work, with several projects going on to receive full, world-premiere productions in our seasons," said **Playhouse Artistic Director Christopher Ashley**. "Patrons have the opportunity to take part in the birth of these new works while giving playwrights invaluable support and feedback in the early stages of their development process."

The DNA Series has been a launching pad for numerous shows that have gone on to productions in future Playhouse seasons, including ***Chasing the Song***, by the Tony Award-winning team of Joe DiPietro and David Bryan (*Memphis*, *Diana*); Pulitzer Prize winner Ayad Akhtar's ***The Who & The What***; Michael Benjamin Washington's ***Blueprints to Freedom***; UC San Diego MFA graduate Jeff Augustin's ***The Last Tiger in Haiti***; Pulitzer Prize winner Quiara Alegria Hudes and Erin McKeown; ***Kill Local***, by UC San Diego MFA graduate Mat Smart; UC San Diego MFA graduate and current playwriting faculty member Naomi Iizuka's ***What Happens Next***; as well as Melissa Ross' ***The Luckiest*** and Keith Bunin's ***The Coast Starlight*** in the upcoming 2019/2020 season.

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All DNA New Work Series projects take place with no scenic, costume or staging elements, and actors will have scripts in hand. The creative teams will be available for interviews for feature coverage; however, in order to preserve the developmental nature of the program, DNA Series presentations are not open to review.

2019 DNA Projects

Airport on Thursday, May 2 at 7:30pm (PDC)

A La Jolla Playhouse Commission

Written and Directed by Guillermo Calderón

Something ominous is happening in the town of Elizabeth, New Jersey. Elizabeth warns her daughter Elizabeth that a psychopath is targeting their cow, Elizabeth. But within this story lie other coded stories, all concocted by a woman torn between leaving and staying. Guillermo Calderon's wildly original new commission for La Jolla Playhouse is a dark comedy about navigating a world of corrosive fears and impermeable borders.

The Best We Could (a family tragedy) on Friday, May 3 at 7:30pm (PDC)

By Emily Feldman

Directed by Kate Eminger

"Are you sitting down? Maybe you should sit down." A daughter's road trip with her father becomes a theatrical journey across more than just state lines in this funny, wise and heartbreaking new play from UC San Diego MFA graduate Emily Feldman.

Slam on Saturday, May 4 at 2pm and 7:30pm (Seuss 1)

Book by Kyle Jarrow

Music and Lyrics by Mark Mothersbaugh and Kyle Jarrow

Adapted from the novel by Nick Hornby

Skate Choreography by Tony Hawk

Directed by Sean Graney

Sam, a 17-year-old kid from a troubled background, finds refuge in the world of skateboarding and through imagined conversations with his idol, Tony Hawk. But when he falls in love with a girl, it seems like everything's looking up – until it all comes crashing down. Mark Mothersbaugh and Kyle Jarrow's musical adaptation of Nick Hornby's novel is a funny and edgy exploration of young adulthood and what it means to wrestle with dreams and disappointments.

Jean, Jonah, and the Ginger Karl on Sunday, May 5 at 2pm (Seuss 1)

By Jeff Augustin

Directed by Joshua Kahan Brody

When Jean arrives in Miami from Haiti, he's determined to "learn America" during a cross-country journey with his pregnant wife. Decades later, his son Jonah makes the same trip in reverse, desperate to understand his father – and discover himself. Two lives unfold side-by-side in UC San Diego MFA graduate Jeff Augustin's (*The Last Tiger in Haiti*) beautiful new play about memories real and imagined. Commissioned by Actors Theatre of Louisville.

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Artist Biographies

Jeff Augustin's (Playwright, *Jean, Jonah, and the Ginger Karl*) play *Little Children Dream of God* premiered at the Roundabout Theatre Company. His other plays include *The Last Tiger in Haiti* (La Jolla Playhouse and Berkeley Rep) and *Cry Old Kingdom* (Humana Festival). He translated *Our Town* into Haitian Creole for Miami New Drama's multi-lingual production. Augustin was the Shank Playwright-in-Residence at Playwrights Horizons and the inaugural Tow Foundation Playwright-in-Residence at Roundabout. He is an alumnus of the New York Theatre Workshop 2050 Fellowship, Rita Goldberg Playwright's Workshop at the Lark and The Working Farm at SPACE on Ryder Farm. Augustin is currently under commission from Manhattan Theatre Club, Actors Theatre of Louisville and La Jolla Playhouse. He writes for *The Morning Show* on Apple and the limited series *The Good Lord Bird* on Showtime. He holds a B.A. from Boston College and an M.F.A. from UC San Diego. www.jeffaugustin.com

Joshua Kahan Brody's (Director, *Jean, Jonah, and the Ginger Karl*) directing work includes *AIRNESS* (Chautauqua Theater Company); *A Funny Thing...* (City Theatre); *King of the Yeas* (Goodman Theatre, Center Theatre Group, San Francisco Playhouse); *The Last Tiger in Haiti* (La Jolla Playhouse, Berkeley Rep); and *Fourteen Flights* (Award for Excellence in Directing, NY Fringe). He has developed work all over the country, including at Atlantic Theater Company, Colorado New Play Summit, New Dramatists, New York Theatre Workshop, Ojai Playwrights Conference, Playwrights Horizons, Perry-Mansfield New Works, SPACE on Ryder Farm and South Coast Repertory. He is a Princess Grace Award winner and received his M.F.A. from UC San Diego and his B.A. from Yale University. He is co-founder of THE TRIP, an experimental, ensemble-driven performance company that celebrates the liveness and mechanics of theater itself. Brody lives in Brooklyn with his wife Sarah and their dog Carla. joshuakahanbrody.com

Guillermo Calderón (Playwright/Director, *Airport*) is a screenwriter, playwright and director based in Chile. His plays include *Neva*, *Diciembre*, *Clase*, *Villa*, *Speech*, *Quake*, *Escuela*, *Kiss*, *Mateluna* and *Goldrausch*. Calderón's productions have toured extensively through South America, North America and Europe. He has been commissioned to write and direct by the Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus, Theater Basel, HAU Hebbel am Ufer, the Royal Court Theatre, Center Theatre Group and the Public Theater in New York City, where he also directed *Neva*. His co-written screenplay *Violeta Went to Heaven* won the World Cinema Jury Prize for Drama at the 2012 Sundance Film Festival. He co-wrote *The Club*, directed by Pablo Larraín, winner of the Silver Bear at the Berlin International Film Festival in 2015, and nominated for the Golden Globes in the Foreign Language category. The script won the Silver Plaque at the Chicago International Film Festival. He wrote the script for *Neruda*, directed by Pablo Larraín, presented at the Quinzaine des Réalisateurs (The Director's Fortnight) during Cannes Film Festival in 2016. He recently directed his play *Villa* in New York City, produced by The Play Company. His new play *B* was produced at the Royal Court Theatre in September 2017.

Kate Eminger (Director, *The Best We Could (a family tragedy)*) is a director and filmmaker based in New York. She has developed and directed work with Clubbed Thumb, Ars Nova, Dixon Place, The Drama League, IRT, NYU, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Luna Stage, SPACE on Ryder Farm, Edinburgh Fringe Festival, Gowanus Arts Productions and Wide Eyed Productions, among others. Recent productions include: *Rats!* by Bryna Turner (Clubbed Thumb Winterworks) and *Next to Normal*. Assistant Directing: Daniel Aukin, Les Waters, Meredith McDonough and Ian Belknap. She is an adjunct professor of directing at Five Towns College. She is a Clubbed Thumb Directing Fellow (2018-2019), Lincoln Center Directors Lab Member (2014), Actors Theater of Louisville Directing Intern (2012-2013) and a SPACE on Ryder Farm Resident Chef. M.F.A. Directing: The New School. keminger.com

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Emily Feldman's (Playwright, *The Best We Could (a family tragedy)*) work has been developed by the Playwrights' Center, Colt Coeur, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Magic Theatre, Alliance Theatre, Roundabout Theatre Company, The Playwrights Realm, Portland Center Stage, Cape Cod Theatre Project, The New Harmony Project, Montana Repertory Theater and Second Stage, among others. She is a co-author of *We've Come to Believe*, produced during the 2019 Humana Festival of New American Plays. Feldman is an alumna of The Working Farm at SPACE on Ryder Farm and the Jerome Fellowship/Core Apprenticeship at the Playwrights' Center, was an Alliance/Kendeda National Graduate Playwriting Competition finalist and was the 2017-2018 Shank Playwright-in-Residence at Playwrights Horizons. She's a recent member of Interstate 73 at Page 73, The Orchard Project NYC Greenhouse and Two River Theater's Emerging Playwrights Group, and is working on new play commissions from Manhattan Theatre Club, Playwrights Horizons and a musical commission from Arena Stage. She received her M.F.A. from UC San Diego and her B.A. from Middlebury College, and currently teaches Undergraduate Playwriting at NYU.

Sean Graney (Director, *Slam*) is a San Diego-based theatre artist obsessed with entertaining the audience. He spent two decades in Chicago as Founder/Artistic Director of the Hypocrites, where he directed over 100 plays. He is most known for adapting Gilbert & Sullivan and *All Our Tragic*, a 12-hour adaptation combining the surviving Greek tragedies into a 12-hour play. He was a Creative Capital recipient, participated in the TCG Career Development Program and was a Fellow at the Radcliffe Institute at Harvard. His work has been seen at Berkeley Rep, Oregon Shakespeare, Actors' Theatre, Chicago Shakespeare, Goodman, Court, Milwaukee Rep and Steppenwolf, among others.

Kyle Jarrow (Book, Music and Lyrics, *Slam*) is a writer and musician who makes work for stage, film and TV. He wrote the book for the Broadway musical *SpongeBob SquarePants*, for which he received Tony, Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle Award nominations. Other plays include *A Very Merry Unauthorized Children's Scientology Pageant* (Obie Award), *The Wildness* (Lortel Award nomination), *Whisper House*, *Love Kills* and *Gorilla Man*. Kyle is creator and executive producer of the television series *Valor*, which premiered on The CW Network and can now be found streaming on Netflix. His feature film *Armless* was an official selection of the Sundance Film Festival. Kyle is also the songwriter and keyboardist for the theatrical rock band Sky-Pony. More info at www.kylejarrow.com

Mark Mothersbaugh's (Music and Lyrics, *Slam*) works as a composer, performer, author, producer, designer and visual artist have become part of the pop culture consciousness. He first became famous as the co-creator and front man for the seminal New Wave band DEVO, whose 1980 album "Freedom of Choice" went Platinum, and "Q: Are We Not Men? A: We Are Devo" went Gold. In recent years, he has transformed into an award-winning composer for television shows and films such as *Pee-Wee's Playhouse*, *The Royal Tenenbaums*, *Rushmore*, *The Lego Movie* and *Thor: Ragnarok*, and then as a fine artist who just celebrated his first 25-city art exhibition, MYOPIA, curated by the Denver Museum of Modern Art. For decades, Mothersbaugh's music and art have been seminal to California's skateboarding culture. In the 70's, DEVO performed with skaters, and DEVO's videos featured skate pros such as Tony Alva and Steve Olson. DEVO has since appeared in countless skate video soundtracks and was inducted into the Skateboarding Hall of Fame in 2013 and nominated for The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, Class of 2019.

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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 101 world premieres, commissioning 52 new works, and sending 32 productions to Broadway, among them the currently-running hit musical *Come From Away* – garnering a total of 38 Tony Awards, including the 1993 Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre. For more information, visit LaJollaPlayhouse.org.