

LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE ANNOUNCES THREE-TIME TONY AWARD WINNER ANDY BLANKENBUEHLER (*HAMILTON*, *BANDSTAND*, *IN THE HEIGHTS*) AND STEPHANIE KLEMONS (*HAMILTON*, *IN THE HEIGHTS*) AS CO-CHOREOGRAPHERS FOR UPCOMING MUSICAL *FLY*

ACCLAIMED ACTORS STORM LEVER AND LINCOLN CLAUSS TO LEAD CAST AS “WENDY” AND “PETER PAN”

La Jolla, CA – La Jolla Playhouse is pleased to announce the choreographers and lead cast members for its upcoming musical *Fly*, based on the novel *Peter and Wendy*, by J.M. Barrie, with book by Pulitzer Prize finalist **Rajiv Joseph** (Playhouse’s *Guards at the Taj*, Broadway’s *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo*); music by Tony, Emmy and Grammy Award winner **Bill Sherman** (music director for *Sesame Street*); lyrics by Obie Award winner **Kirsten Childs** (*The Bubbly Black Girl Sheds Her Chameleon Skin*) and **Rajiv Joseph**, directed by multiple Tony Award-winning producer **Jeffrey Seller** (*Hamilton*, *Rent*, *Avenue Q*, *In the Heights*). *Fly* will run in the Mandell Weiss Theatre **February 18 – March 29, 2020**.

The creative team also includes three-time Tony Award winner **Andy Blankenbuehler** (*Hamilton*, *Bandstand*, *In the Heights*, as well as the current *Cats* film) and **Stephanie Klemons** (*In the Heights*, Associate Choreographer for *Hamilton*) as co-choreographers.

The musical will feature **Storm Lever** (Playhouse/Broadway production of *SUMMER: The Donna Summer Musical*) as “Wendy” and **Lincoln Clauss** (*Bat Out of Hell*) as “Peter Pan.” The complete cast and creative team will be announced in January.

“Andy Blankenbuehler’s acclaimed body of work on Broadway is truly extraordinary, and it’s an honor to have him and Stephanie Klemons join *Fly*’s dynamo creative team, said **Christopher Ashley**, the Rich Family Artistic Director of La Jolla Playhouse. “I’m also delighted to welcome back Storm Lever following her star turn and Broadway debut in the Playhouse-born *SUMMER: The Donna Summer Musical*. Her dazzling talent and youthful energy give fresh voice to Wendy in this new take on a timeless story.”

About Fly

In *Fly*, two major Tony Award-winning Broadway veterans team up with two of the most exciting writers in American theatre today to bring a cherished tale into the present. Wendy’s life is about to change forever when she meets a boy named Peter, a pirate named Hook, and a beguiling, beautiful Crocodile, who’s much more than meets the eye. In this thrilling, funny, dangerous look at JM Barrie’s novel *Peter Pan*, a whole new Neverland comes to life. *Fly* takes audiences on an adventure propelled by a powerful and percussive score, dynamic choreography and aerial acrobatics.

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Artist Biographies

Andy Blankenhuehler (Co-Choreographer) is three-time Tony Award winner for his choreography in the Broadway productions of *Bandstand*, *In the Heights* and *Hamilton*, for which he also received London's Olivier Award. The recent production of *Bandstand* (director/choreographer) also received the Drama Desk and Chita Rivera Award for Best Choreography. Other Broadway credits include *Bring It On, 9 to 5*, *The People in the Picture*, *The Apple Tree*, *Annie*, and the recent revival of *CATS*. Upcoming theatre projects include the new musical *Only Gold* with British singer/songwriter Kate Nash and the musical *Five Points*. On television, Mr. Blankenhuehler's work has been seen most recently on the Emmy Award winning FX series *Fosse/Verdon*, and his choreography will be seen in the upcoming Universal Studio film of the musical *Cats*. He is very proud to have made his concert debut earlier this year with a piece entitled *Remember Our Song* for the Tulsa Ballet Company. As a performer, Mr. Blankenhuehler has danced on Broadway in *Fosse*, *Contact*, *Man of La Mancha*, *Saturday Night Fever*, *Steel Pier*, *Big* and *Guys and Dolls*. Originally from Cincinnati, Ohio, Mr. Blankenhuehler resides in New York City, with his wife Elly and two children, Luca and Sofia. Mr. Blankenhuehler is a recipient of a special 2015 Drama Desk Award for his achievement in the theatre. Mr. Blankenhuehler received the 2018 Kennedy Center Honors for his work on the musical *Hamilton*.

Kirsten Childs' (Co-Lyricist) credits include *The Bubbly Black Girl Sheds Her Chameleon Skin* (Obie, Kleban, Audelco, Richard Rodgers, Gilman Gonzalez-Falla Awards; Rockefeller and Jonathan Larson Grants; and Lortel, NAACP, Drama Desk Award nominations); *Bella: An American Tall Tale* (Frederick Loewe Award, Edward M. Kennedy Prize Finalist, 4 Audelco Awards); *Washington Square* with Ben Wexler; New Group commission with Gordon Greenberg; *Funked Up Fairy Tales*; *Miracle Brothers*. Lucky Boy Penn State Commission; NEA, Larson grants; American Songbook series; New Electric Company; Disney's *Believe* and Disney's *Wishes*. Guggenheim Museum Works & Process. Dramatists Guild Council member. Songwriter for Dianne Reeves (with Billy Childs).

Lincoln Clauss ("Peter") is an actor and singer based in New York City. Recently he appeared in the North American tour and New York City Center productions of Jim Steinman's *Bat Out of Hell*. Regional credits include: *Burn All Night* (American Repertory Theatre), *Evocation to Visible Appearance* (Actors Theatre of Louisville, 42nd Humana Festival of New Plays), *Peter Pan & Tinkerbell* (Laguna Playhouse, Lythgoe Family Panto) and *Borderline* (Eugene O'Neill Theatre Center). He is a proud alum of Ball State University's Department of Theatre and Dance.

Rajiv Joseph (Librettist/Co-Lyricist) play *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo* was a 2010 Pulitzer Prize finalist for Drama and also awarded a grant for Outstanding New American Play by the National Endowment for the Arts. He has twice won the Obie Award for Best New American Play, first in 2016 with *Guards at the Taj* (also a 2016 Lortel Winner for Best Play) and then, in 2018, for *Describe the Night*. Other plays include *Archduke*, *Gruesome Playground Injuries*, *Animals Out of Paper*, *The Lake Effect*, *The North Pool* and *Mr. Wolf*. Joseph has been awarded artistic grants from the Whiting Foundation, United States Artists and the Harold & Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust. He is a board member of the Lark Play Development Center in New York City, and a company member of the Steppenwolf Theatre in Chicago. He served for three years in the Peace Corps in Senegal and now lives in Brooklyn, NY.

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Stephanie Klemons (Co-Choreographer) is a Drama Desk Award-winning performer, choreographer and director who has worked on the pre-Broadway and Broadway productions of *Hamilton*, *In the Heights*, *Bring It On* and *If/Then*. Her work can be seen currently on Broadway and around the world as the Associate and Supervising Choreographer of the smash hit *Hamilton*. In 2018 she directed and choreographed the Broadway Center Stage production of *In the Heights* at the Kennedy Center to critical acclaim. Following the Kennedy Center Production, she served as the director and choreographer of *This Is Sadie*, a New York City Children's Theater Production that she developed alongside Barbara Zinn Krieger. In 2020 she'll be directing and choreographing a re-tooled production of *Little Shop of Horrors* at Arkansas Rep as well as developing a new musical to helm for NYC Children's Theater 2021 season. Other choreography credits include *Rock of Ages* (PCLO, Drury Lane) and Frank Wildhorn's *Zelda* (Flatrock Playhouse). Commercially she choreographed content for Victoria's Secret, Vogue, Sesame Street, the new Netflix Series "The Hunt," and was the choreographer behind the viral "Time of Our Lives" Super Bowl commercial featuring Eli Manning and Odell Beckham.

Storm Lever ("Wendy") starred as "Duckling Donna/Mimi" in the Broadway and La Jolla Playhouse productions of *SUMMER: The Donna Summer Musical*. Off-Broadway: *The Winger* (Dorothy). Regional: *Almost Famous* at The Old Globe (Polexia), *Freaky Friday* at Signature Theater, (Savannah), La Jolla Playhouse, Alley Theater and Cleveland Playhouse (Ensemble). *Emotional Creature* at the Berkeley Rep (u/s). @stormieweather

Jeffrey Seller (Director) is the winner of four Tony Awards for Best Musical: *Rent* (1996), *Avenue Q* (2004), *In the Heights* (2008) and *Hamilton* (2015). He also produced and/or developed *De La Guarda* (1998), Andrew Lippa's *The Wild Party* (2000), Baz Luhrmann's direction of Puccini's *La Bohème* (2002), *High Fidelity* (2006), the Broadway revival of *West Side Story* (2009), Sting's *The Last Ship* (2014) and last season's *The Cher Show*. Seller, along with former business partner Kevin McCollum, created the first Broadway lottery for *Rent*, which, for 22 years, has been a popular way to see Broadway shows, often in the first two rows, at an affordable price. He is the only producer to have produced two Pulitzer Prize-winning musicals – *Rent* and *Hamilton*. Seller directed the first production of *Fly* at Dallas Theatre Center in 2013 and *The Man in the Ceiling*, by Jules Feiffer and Andrew Lippa, at the Bay Street Theater in 2017. In 2018, he served as executive producer of the NBC series *Rise*, based on Michael Sokolove's book, *Drama High*. Seller grew up in Oak Park, Michigan and is a proud graduate of the University of Michigan.

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Bill Sherman (Composer) won the 2008 Tony Award for Best Orchestrations for *In the Heights* and the 2008 Grammy Award as the co-producer of the *In the Heights* Original Broadway Cast Album. He also won the 2011 Emmy Award for Outstanding Original Song-Children's and Animation for *Sesame Street's* "What I Am" and the 2014 Emmy Award for Outstanding Original Song-Children's and Animation for *Sesame Street's* "The Power of Yet," as well as the 2018 Emmy Award for Outstanding Original Song-Children's and Animation for *Sesame Street's* "A Song About Songs" featuring Sia. He was also nominated for a 2009 Emmy Award for Outstanding Original Main Title Theme Music for AMC's "Storymakers." Sherman is the Music Director of *Sesame Street*, *The Electric Company* and *Nature Cat* on PBS and HBO as well as *Julie's Greenroom* on Netflix. Recently, he produced the *Hamilton* Original Broadway Cast Album with The Roots for Atlantic Records, for which he won a 2016 Grammy Award. He also composed the music for *All Things Must Pass*, a documentary about the rise and fall of Tower Records directed by Colin Hanks. He was also the Music Supervisor for the Discovery Channel series "Hello, World!" He is a co-host of Questlove Supreme on Pandora with Ahmir Thompson of the Roots and Phonte Coleman of Little Brother. He is a proud member of NY's premier hip-hop, improv and comedy group, Freestyle Love Supreme that traveled to the Aspen, Edinburgh, Melbourne and Montreal comedy festivals. He is a graduate of Wesleyan University.

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 plays and musicals, including mounting 102 world premieres, commissioning 52 new works, and sending 32 productions to Broadway – including the currently-running hit musical *Come From Away* – garnering a total of 38 Tony Awards, as well as the 1993 Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre. LaJollaPlayhouse.org.

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