

LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE PRESENTS THE BENGSONS' SOVEREIGNTY HYMNS

PLAYHOUSE-COMMISSIONED WORK FEATURES SONG CYCLE EXPLORING QUESTIONS OF REPRODUCTIVE LIBERTY

La Jolla, CA – La Jolla Playhouse announces the presentation of *Sovereignty Hymns*, a commissioned work that features a video series of original songs exploring questions about reproductive liberty. Created by Abigail and Shaun Bengson (*Hundred Days*), the series will launch with “Hymn 1: For Love – Greta’s Story” on Friday, June 3.

Inspired by interviews with people whose lives have been impacted by abortion, *Sovereignty Hymns* is an insightful, heartfelt musical investigation that addresses timely issues around body sovereignty. More at lajollaplayhouse.org/sovereignty-hymns/.

In creating *Sovereignty Hymns*, the Bengsons stated, “We’ve been writing these songs, these hymns, to hold one another’s bodies sacred, to honor the sanctity of everyone’s right to birth or not to birth. We believe that every choice made around reproduction is a choice towards life – towards the life of the pregnant person, of the unborn child, and of the children already living. We hope that with these songs we will make space to have courageous conversations about the complexities and challenges of this issue, while above all honoring everyone’s right to live freely in their own sovereign body.”

“The Bengsons are incredibly passionate and powerful storytellers, and their works always delve deeply into provocative personal issues. *Sovereignty Hymns* is yet another example of how they approach a delicate and often divisive topic with compassion and generosity – all with their singular musical vocabulary,” noted Christopher Ashley, the Rich Family Artistic Director of La Jolla Playhouse.

Abigail and Shaun Bengson are a married composing and performing duo based in NYC and VT who have performed across the country and around the world. Their video for *The Keep Going Song* has been viewed over 4 million times. Three of their singles have been featured on *So You Think You Can Dance* (FOX). Their theater work includes *The Keep Going Song* (Actor’s Theatre of Louisville), *My Joy is Heavy* (Arena Stage), *Hundred Days* (La Jolla Playhouse, New York Theatre Workshop, US Tour), *The Lucky Ones* (Ars Nova), *Where the Mountain Meets the Sea* (ATL’s Humana Festival; upcoming: Fall 2022 at Manhattan Theatre Club), *Anything That Gives Off Light* (Edinburgh Theatre Festival), *You’ll Still Call Me By Name* (New York Live Arts, Jacob’s Pillow), and *Iphigenia in Aulis* (Classic Stage Company). Also upcoming/in development: *Ohio* (piece by piece productions). They have received the Jonathan Larson and Richard Rodgers Awards and nominations for the Drama Desk, Drama League, and Lucille Lortel Awards.

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 105 world premieres, commissioning 60 new works, and sending 33 productions to Broadway – including the hit musical *Come From Away* – garnering a total of 38 Tony Awards, as well as the 1993 Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre.

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