

## LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE AND UC SAN DIEGO PARTNER ON NEW PROGRAM TO OFFER JOINT COMMISSION TO EACH GRADUATING MFA PLAYWRIGHT

La Jolla, CA – La Jolla Playhouse and the University of California San Diego recently announced a new program offering each UC San Diego MFA playwriting student a **joint commission** for a new work upon graduation. The first two commissions, awarded to 2019 graduates **Steph Del Rosso** and **Ava Geyer**, were announced at UC San Diego’s graduation on March 23.

“UC San Diego’s graduate playwriting program is among the very best in the nation, nurturing the voices of countless stellar alumni – including Jeff Augustin, Naomi Iizuka, Mat Smart and Lauren Yee, all of whom have been (or soon will be) produced at the Playhouse,” said **Playhouse Artistic Director Christopher Ashley**. “This new program strengthens the great bond between UC San Diego and the Playhouse, and guarantees that each MFA playwriting graduate will continue to have a relationship with us as they enter the professional world.”

“The star in San Diego’s vibrant emerging artist scene shines even brighter with this new program,” said **UC San Diego Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla**. “Our unique 36-year partnership with the award-winning La Jolla Playhouse not only develops and showcases promising new talent but also attracts the greater community to UC San Diego for top-notch theater. The Playhouse is the *jewel* in the crown of the many accessible, rewarding cultural enrichment opportunities located on our campus.”

“Prominent on the national scene over many decades, UC San Diego has inspired other top MFA playwriting programs to replicate our Wagner New Play Festival, and now our campus ‘one ups’ that with professional commissions for graduating MFA playwrights from a superb, Tony Award-winning regional theatre,” noted **Allan Havis, Chair of the UC San Diego Department of Theatre & Dance**.

Since its inception, the Playhouse and the University of California, San Diego have worked closely together to create an integrated environment for the adventurous theatre produced by the Tony Award-winning La Jolla Playhouse and the nationally-renowned theatre training program offered by the UC San Diego Department of Theatre & Dance. The two entities share four performance spaces – the Mandell Weiss Theatre, the Sheila and Hughes Potiker Theatre, the Mandell Weiss Forum and the Theodore and Adele Shank Theatre. The Playhouse offers professional residencies to every UC San Diego graduate student in acting, directing, design and stage management, providing students invaluable opportunities to work on major productions at the Playhouse.

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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. Internationally-renowned for the development of new plays and musicals, the Playhouse has mounted 101 world premieres, commissioned 52 new works, and sent 32 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.

**UC San Diego's Master of Fine Arts (MFA) Program in Theatre** was created in 1974. Several years later the Department of Theatre and Dance began offering a Ph.D. in Theatre and Drama, a joint program with UC Irvine. Currently, the MFA program offers degrees in acting, dance, directing, design (costume, lighting, scenic, sound), stage management and playwriting. UC San Diego's Theatre & Dance department is consistently ranked among the top graduate theatre training programs in the country. Scholars in the department are in the forefront of their respective fields and the work of faculty artists is seen regularly in New York, at major American regional theatres, in Europe and elsewhere around the world. The department's faculty features artists and scholars with national and international profiles whose research and professional work is integral to their work as teachers.

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