

LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE ANNOUNCES CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM FOR *DERECHO*

Play Marks 11th Show from Playhouse's DNA New Work Series To Receive World Premiere in Subscription Season

La Jolla, CA – La Jolla Playhouse announces the cast and creative team for its world-premiere production of *Derecho*, by **Noelle Viñas**, directed by **Delicia Turner Sonnenberg** (Playhouse's *The Garden*), running July 23 – August 18 in the Mandell Weiss Forum. For more information, please visit LaJollaPlayhouse.org.

The cast features **Ashley Alvarez** as *Eugenia Silva*, **Jorge Sánchez Díaz** as *José Portillo*, **Caro Guzmán** as *Mercedes Silva*, **Eric Hagen** as *Jeff Randolph*, **Carla Navarro** as *Soledad Portillo* and **Luis Vega** as *Gabe Diaz*, along with understudies **Andrew Gallop**, **Germaine Lebrón** and **Kat Peña**.

The creative team includes **Tanya Orellana**, Scenic Designer; **Dominique Fawn Hill**, Costume Designer; **Sherrice Mojgani**, Lighting Designer; **Germán Martínez**, Sound Designer; **Alberto “Albee” Alvarado**, Hair and Wig Designer; **Zharia O’Neal**, Dramaturg; **tbd casting co.**; **Stephanie Yankwitt, CSA/Jacole Kitchen**, Casting; **Chandra R.M. Anthenill**, Stage Manager, and **Alexa Burn**, Assistant Stage Manager.

“It is always incredibly gratifying to mount a full production of a piece from our DNA New Work Series, where *Derecho* riveted audiences in 2022. Noelle Viñas has crafted a fascinating, thought-provoking piece that taps into so many relevant issues in our country right now,” said **Christopher Ashley**, the Rich Family Artistic Director of La Jolla Playhouse.

A series of intense storms — a “derecho” — is bearing down on an affluent Virginia neighborhood near D.C., where Eugenia Silva is preparing for a crucial meeting. Eugenia is a politician hoping to join the wave of women of color elected to public office. Her sister Mercedes is a struggling musician fighting to find her way on her own terms. As winds rise and thunder cracks — and tensions between the sisters reach a boiling point — Eugenia’s political ambitions crash into Mercedes’s need to reconnect her sister with their roots. Propulsive and whip-smart, *Derecho* confronts how traditional Latino values conflict with an ever-changing American definition of success. Will the storm wipe out their relationship and derail Eugenia’s campaign, or will the rains provide a fresh start? This engrossing drama from Uruguayan-American writer Noelle Viñas harnesses the danger of colliding the personal and political to reach your goals. Director Delicia Turner Sonnenberg leads the production, bringing the poetic language and powerful imagery to life.

Derecho is the 11th piece to have its world premiere at La Jolla Playhouse after development during the annual DNA New Work Series.

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Noelle Viñas is a playwright, TV writer and educator from Springfield, Virginia and Montevideo, Uruguay. Viñas was a recipient of the 2020 John Gassner Award and the 2021 Jeffrey Melnick New Playwright Award at Primary Stages. During the pandemic, her plays were produced by Shotgun Players, Colt Coeur, Imagination Stage and Westtown School. Her work has been developed or in residence as a member of the 2022 Working Farm at SPACE on Ryder Farm, New York Stage and Film, Tofte Lake Center, Bay Area Playwrights Festival, Djerassi Resident Artists Program and the Civilians R&D Group. Viñas resides between Brooklyn and LA, where she was most recently a staff writer on *Mrs. Davis*. BA: Emerson College; MFA: Brooklyn College.

Delicia Turner Sonnenberg's Playhouse credits include *The Garden*, 2022 POP Tour *HOOPLA!*, 2018 POP Tour *#SuperShinySara*, WOW Festival's *The Car Plays SD* and *Counterweight*. Regional Credits: The Old Globe Theatre, South Coast Rep, San Diego Rep, Round House Theatre, Actors Theatre of Louisville Humana Festival, Utah Shakespeare Festival. Other Credits: Theatre Calgary, Center Rep, Theatre Squared, Island City Stage, Diversionary Theatre, Cygnet Theatre, New Village Arts, Playwrights Project, Mo`olelo Performing Arts, and productions at The Old Globe/University of San Diego Shiley Graduate Theatre Program, San Diego State University, UC San Diego, Sonoma State, and Rutgers University among others. Delicia is a founder and the former Artistic Director of MOXIE Theatre which she helmed for 12 acclaimed seasons, receiving the Des McAnuff New Visions Award for "Risk Taking Leadership and Body of Work" and "2015 Director of the Year" from the San Diego Theatre Critics Circle. She is currently a Resident Artist at the Old Globe Theatre and serves proudly on the Board for La Jolla Playhouse. Delicia was twice a recipient of the Van Lier Directing Fellowship through Second Stage Theater in New York, and is an alumna of the New York Drama League's Directors Program, as well as TCG's New Generations Program. She has received NAACP Theatre Awards, KPBS "Patte" Awards, a Women's International Center Living Legacy Award, as well as many Craig Noel Awards from the San Diego Theatre Critics Circle.

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 works, including mounting 120 world premieres, commissioning 70 new works, and sending 36 productions to Broadway, garnering a total of 42 Tony Awards, as well as the 1993 Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre.

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FACT SHEET

WHAT: *Derecho*
By Noelle Viñas
Directed by Delicia Turner Sonnenberg

WHEN: **July 23 – August 18** (Press Opening: July 28 at 7pm)
Tue/Wed/Thu/Fri at 7:30pm; Sat at 2pm & 8pm; Sun at 1pm & 7pm

WHERE: **Mandell Weiss Forum, La Jolla Playhouse**
2910 La Jolla Village Drive, La Jolla, CA 92037

WHO: Scenic Designer: Tanya Orellana
Costume Designer: Dominique Fawn Hill
Lighting Designer: Sherrice Mojgani
Sound Designer: Germán Martínez
Hair and Wig Designer: Alberto “Albee” Alvarado
Dramaturg: Zharia O’Neal
Casting: tbd casting co.; Stephanie Yankwitt, CSA/Jacole Kitchen
Stage Manager: Chandra R.M. Anthenill
Assistant Stage Manager: Alexa Burn

Cast: *Eugenia Silva* Ashley Alvarez
José Portillo Jorge Sánchez Díaz
Mercedes Silva Caro Guzmán
Jeff Randolph Eric Hagen
Soledad Portillo Carla Navarro
Gabe Díaz Luis Vega

Understudies: Andrew Gallop, Germainne Lebrón, Kat Peña

BACKGROUND:

A series of intense storms — a “derecho” — is bearing down on an affluent Virginia neighborhood near D.C., where Eugenia Silva is preparing for a crucial meeting. Eugenia is a politician hoping to join the wave of women of color elected to public office. Her sister Mercedes is a struggling musician fighting to find her way on her own terms. As winds rise and thunder cracks — and tensions between the sisters reach a boiling point — Eugenia’s political ambitions crash into Mercedes’s need to reconnect her sister with their roots. Propulsive and whip-smart, *Derecho* confronts how traditional Latino values conflict with an ever-changing American definition of success. Will the storm wipe out their relationship and derail Eugenia’s campaign, or will the rains provide a fresh start? This engrossing drama from Uruguayan-American writer Noelle Viñas harnesses the danger of colliding the personal and political to reach your goals. Director Delicia Turner Sonnenberg leads the production, bringing the poetic language and powerful imagery to life.

TICKETS: LaJollaPlayhouse.org; (858) 550-1010

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