

## LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE ANNOUNCES CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM FOR WORLD PREMIERE OF *LOVE ALL*

### Playhouse's 2023/2024 Season Opener to Feature Broadway's **Chilina Kennedy** as Sports Icon **Billie Jean King**

La Jolla, CA – La Jolla Playhouse announces the cast and creative team for its world-premiere production of ***Love All***, by **Anna Deavere Smith** (Playhouse's *Let Me Down Easy*; Broadway's *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992*), directed by **Marc Bruni** (Broadway's *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*) running **June 3 – July 2** (press opening: Friday, June 9). For tickets and more information, please visit [LaJollaPlayhouse.org](https://LaJollaPlayhouse.org).

***Love All*** is the triumphant story of the rise of sports icon and social justice pioneer Billie Jean King. The trailblazer for equality faced tough competition on the court and adversity in the world, all against a backdrop of the massive social changes of the 1960s and '70s. With support from King herself, this exciting world premiere comes from the pen of award-winning playwright, professor, actor and author Anna Deavere Smith, whose artistry is evidenced by the ground-breaking work she has created for more than four decades, including the Tony-nominated *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992*. Under the skillful hand of director Marc Bruni (*Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*), *Love All* evokes the highs and lows of Billie Jean King's extraordinary career, and asks not just what it takes to be a champion, but what it takes to change the course of history.

The cast features **Bianca Amato** as "Ilana/Alice Marble," **Rebecca S'Manga Frank** as "Althea Gibson," **Elena Hurst** as "Rosie Casals," **Wynn Harmon** as "Psychiatrist/Merv Rose/Ted Tinling," **Ben Jacoby** as "Bill Moffitt," **Chilina Kennedy** (Broadway's *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*; Playhouse's *Jesus Christ Superstar*) as "Billie Jean King," **Lenne Klingaman** as "Frankie Durr," **John Kroft** as "Larry King," **Nancy Lemenager** as "Gladys Heldman," **Kate Rockwell** (Playhouse's *Hollywood*) as "Marilyn Barnett," **Allison Spratt Pearce** (Playhouse's *Come From Away, Sideways*) as "Margaret Court," and **Justin Withers** as "Arthur Ashe," along with understudies: **Summer Broyhill**, **Geno Carr**, **Spencer McCabe Hunsicker**, **Noah Keyishian**, **Mikaela Macias**, **Colby Muhammad**, **Ellen Nikbakht** and **Shana Wride**.

The creative team includes: **Robert Brill**, Scenic Designer; **Ann Hould-Ward**, Costume Designer; **Jiyoun Chang**, Lighting Designer; **Darron L. West**, Sound Designer; **S. Katy Tucker**, Projection Designer; **Jared Janas** and **Cassie Williams**, Co-Wig and Hair Designers; **Alisa Solomon**, Dramaturg; **Ann James**, Sensitivity Specialist; **The Telsey Office**, **Karyn Casl, CSA** and **Jacole Kitchen**, Casting; and **Brian Bogin**, Stage Manager.

"Billie Jean King's exploits on the tennis court are legendary. In *Love All*, however, Anna Deavere Smith illuminates Billie Jean's equally ferocious off-the-court battles for fairness and equality. Our extraordinary cast and creative team will bring the full picture of this dynamic pioneer to vibrant life," said **Christopher Ashley**, the Rich Family Artistic Director of La Jolla Playhouse.

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**Anna Deavere Smith** is a playwright and actress. She's credited with having created a new form of theater. Her plays, which focus on contemporary issues from multiple points of view, are composed of excerpts of hundreds of interviews. Plays and films based on them include *Fires in the Mirror*, *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992*, *Let Me Down Easy* and *Notes from the Field*, about the school-to-prison pipeline. Her work as an actress on television includes: *Inventing Anna*, *The West Wing*, *Nurse Jackie* and *Black-ish*. Mainstream movies include *Philadelphia*, *The American President*, *Rachel Getting Married* and Billy Crystal's new movie *Here Today*. President Obama awarded Smith the National Endowment for the Humanities Medal. She's the recipient of the MacArthur Fellowship, several Obie awards, a Drama Desk award, and the George Polk Career Award in Journalism and the Dean's Medal from Stanford University School of Medicine. She was a runner-up for the Pulitzer Prize and nominated for two Tony Awards. She's a professor at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. She has several honorary doctorate degrees including those from Harvard, Yale, Dartmouth, Spelman College, Juilliard and Oxford.

**Marc Bruni** most recently directed the critically acclaimed *Guys and Dolls* at the Kennedy Center, where he also directed *The Music Man*, *How to Succeed...*, and *50 Years of Broadway*. He directed the Tony, Grammy and Olivier Award-winning *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical* on Broadway, in the West End, US/UK Tours, and in Australia, winning the Helpmann and Green Room Awards for Best Direction of a Musical. His production of *Trevor: The Musical* (Off Broadway's Stage 42) is currently streaming on Disney+. Other selected credits include *The Explorers Club* (Manhattan Theater Club), *Ordinary Days* (Roundabout), *Old Jews Telling Jokes* (Westside Theatre and Royal George - Jeff Award nomination for Direction), *Other People's Money* (Long Wharf - CCC Award nomination), *I Hate Hamlet* (Bucks County), *The Sound of Music* (Chicago Lyric Opera), *The Tale of Despereaux* (with PigPen Theatre Co.- Old Globe, Berkeley Rep), *The Nutty Professor* (Ogunquit), *Hey, Look Me Over!*, *Paint Your Wagon*, *Pipe Dream* and *Fanny* for NY City Center Encores! and seven shows for the St. Louis MUNY. He is a graduate of Dartmouth College.

**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 108 world premieres, commissioning 60 new works, and sending 33 productions to Broadway – among them 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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## FACT SHEET

**WHAT:** *Love All*  
By Anna Deavere Smith; Directed by Marc Bruni

**WHEN:** **June 3 – July 2** (Press Opening: June 9)  
Tue/Wed at 7:30pm; Thu/Fri/Sat at 8pm; Sun at 7pm; Sat/Sun at 2pm

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

**WHO:** Scenic Designer: Robert Brill  
Costume Designer: Ann Hould-Ward  
Lighting Designer: Jiyoung Chang  
Sound Designer: Darron L. West  
Projection Designer: S. Katy Tucker  
Co-Wig and Hair Designer: Jared Janas and Cassie Williams  
Dramaturg: Alisa Solomon  
Sensitivity Specialist: Ann James  
Casting: The Telsey Co, Karyn Casl, C.S.A, and Jacole Kitchen  
Stage Manager: Brian Bogin

Cast: Bianca Amato	<i>Ilana/Alice Marble</i>
Rebecca S'Manga Frank	<i>Althea Gibson</i>
Elena Hurst	<i>Rosie Casals</i>
Wynn Harmon	<i>Psychiatrist/Merv Rose/Ted Tinling</i>
Ben Jacoby	<i>Bill Moffitt</i>
Chilina Kennedy	<i>Billie Jean King</i>
Lenne Klingaman	<i>Frankie Durr</i>
John Kroft	<i>Larry King</i>
Nancy Lemenager	<i>Gladys Heldman</i>
Kate Rockwell	<i>Marilyn Barnett</i>
Allison Spratt Pearce	<i>Margaret Court</i>
Justin Withers	<i>Arthur Ashe</i>

Understudies: Summer Broyhill, Geno Carr, Spencer McCabe Hunsicker,  
Noah Keyishian, Mikaela Macias, Colby Muhammad,  
Ellen Nikbakht, Shana Wride

**BACKGROUND:** *Love All* is the triumphant story of the rise of sports icon and social justice pioneer Billie Jean King. The trailblazer for equality faced tough competition on the court and adversity in the world, all against a backdrop of the massive social changes of the 1960s and '70s. With support from King herself, this exciting world premiere comes from the pen of award-winning playwright, professor, actor and author Anna Deavere Smith, whose artistry is evidenced by the ground-breaking work she has created for more than four decades, including the Tony-nominated *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992*. Under the skillful hand of director Marc Bruni (*Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*), *Love All* evokes the highs and lows of Billie Jean King's extraordinary career, and asks not just what it takes to be a champion, but what it takes to change the course of history.

**TICKETS:** [LaJollaPlayhouse.org](http://LaJollaPlayhouse.org); (858) 550-1010

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