

LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE ANNOUNCES CAST FOR DIGITAL WITHOUT WALLS (WOW) PRODUCTION OF *THE WIZARDS OF OAKWOOD DRIVE*, A FUN, INTERACTIVE PERFORMANCE FOR KIDS

La Jolla, CA – La Jolla Playhouse announces the cast of its production of [The Wizards of Oakwood Drive](#), by Tom Salamon (*Accomplice: San Diego*, *The Grift at the Lafayette Hotel*), commissioned by the Playhouse for its Digital Without Walls (WOW) series. The show runs July 16 – 26; tickets are \$25 and are available at LaJollaPlayhouse.org or (858) 550-1010.

This live, Zoom-centered performance for young audiences is an all-out, winner-take-all magic spell contest. Up to 10 kids at a time will embark on a treasure hunt around their own homes, as our sibling wizards enact increasingly hilarious and mysterious spells for the panel of kid judges. With a little help from parents, participants will find special items in hidden locations in a one-of-a-kind WOW piece that is sure to delight. While working together and learning that wizard teamwork makes the wizard dream work, kids will have a chance to connect in a special interactive performance that will infuse their summer with a little magic.

Alternating in the roles of the sibling wizards will be **Claire Chapelli, Eliana Payne, Sofia Sassone, Jonathan Randell Silver, Connor Sullivan** and **Edred Utomi**, who has been starring as Alexander Hamilton in the *Hamilton* national tour.

“Tom Salamon brings his clever, clue-finding style to our Digital WOW series with a delightful online performance that takes kids on a whimsical journey filled with surprises, led by three incredibly talented acting duos,” said **Christopher Ashley**, the Rich Family Artistic Director of La Jolla Playhouse.

The Playhouse’s [Digital Without Walls](#) program is a series of Playhouse-commissioned, digitally-delivered productions. From imaginative, one-on-one experiences to collective events, these brand new virtual WOW offerings bring world-class artists directly into patrons’ homes. Productions to date include: **Ancient**, by San Diego-based artists Mike Sears and Lisa Berger (2019 WOW Festival’s *How High the Moon*); **Walks of Life**, by the San Diego-based **Blindspot Collective** (2019 WOW Festival’s *Hall Pass*); **BINGE**, by UK-based artist Brian Lobel, **Show Me A Good Time**, by the Berlin-based Gob Squad (2017 WOW Festival’s *Super Night Shot*); **The Totally Fake Latino News with Culture Clash**, by Culture Clash (*American Night*, *Zorro in Hell*); and **Portaleza**, by Artist-in-Residence David Israel Reynoso (WOW Festival’s *Las Quinceañeras* and *Waking La Llorona*; Off-Broadway’s *Sleep No More*).

Tom Salamon began his career as a writer and director in 2005 with *Accomplice: New York*, which is widely regarded as a pioneering and influential work in the early days of immersive theater. In the years since he has written and directed work in New York City, London, Los Angeles and San Diego; been produced by Tony Award-winning theaters, including La Jolla Playhouse, where his *Accomplice: San Diego* and *The Grift* enjoyed sold-out, extended runs; and co-produced shows with Tony winner Neil Patrick Harris and the Menier Chocolate Factory. In 2016, he co-wrote and directed *Goosebumps: Alive* in London, based on RL Stine’s best-selling children’s books and co-written with Gabriel Greene, La Jolla Playhouse Director of Artistic Development. In 2019, he wrote and directed immersive experiences at San Diego Comic Con for Amazon Prime Video’s *The Boys*, *Carnival Row*, and *The Expanse*, and in Los Angeles for Netflix’s *The Witcher*. He has also developed immersive experiences for Walt Disney Imagineering for use inside the parks, on tour, and on cruise lines, and created and directed tailor-made events for such companies as Paramount Pictures, Universal Pictures, Google, American Express and Hewlett Packard, among many others. His shows have been attended by over 350,000 people and now, maybe, your kid. www.TomSalamon.com

Claire Chapelli is a Cuban-American actor, comedian, and singer. She received her B.F.A. in Acting from Carnegie Mellon University and graduated from UCB's Improv Program in LA. She loves immersive theater and recently performed with The Speakeasy Society, Cages DTLA, and is the Director of Theatrical Experience at the Madcap Motel. She was also a part of the most recent NBC Spotlight Diversity Showcase. Claire is so excited to be working and innovating with La Jolla Playhouse during such a crazy time. www.clairechapelli.com

Eliana Payne is thrilled to be joining La Jolla Playhouse for this virtual theatre endeavor. Previous credits include *Servant of Two Masters* (New Village Arts); *Allegory* (La Jolla Playhouse WOW Festival); *For the Love of It* (SD Circus Collective); *Cirque Electrique*, *O Wondrous Night* (Sea World); *Dirty Monkey*, *Hollywood Hit* (Dinner Detective); *Hamlet*, *Metamorphosis*, *Modern* (San Diego State University); *A Piece of My Heart*, *Sherlock Holmes: The Final Adventure* (Grossmont College); *SUDS*, *A Little Night Music* (Coronado Playhouse).

Sofia Sassone is extremely excited to be working on *The Wizards of Oakwood Drive* for the Playhouse's Digital Without Walls series! Originally from Buenos Aires, her theatre career began in the U.S. while attending Florida International University, where she got a B.F.A. in Theatre Performance. Her credits include *An Ideal Husband*, *Rumors* and *Stage Kiss*. She has also written and performed for the *South Florida One Minute Play Festival* and directed various shows for *Miami One Acts* and *Microteatro*. Her San Diego credits include *Loves and Hours* with Scripps Ranch Theatre, the *Plays by Young Writers Festival* and *FADE* at Moxie Theatre.

Jonathan Randell Silver is thrilled to working with La Jolla Playhouse as a wizard. He hails from New York City where he works as an actor and magician on stage, film, and TV. Select Off-Broadway/Regional shows include: *Bump*; *Please Continue* (Ensemble Studio Theatre); *Shear Madness!* (New World Stages); *Red Emma & The Mad Monk* (The Tank); *Lenin's Embalmers* (Wellfleet Harbor); *Animal Crackers* (Denver Center); *The Fantasticks!* (Long Wharf). Select Film/TV: *Nevada* (Sundance); *Rover* (Slamdance); *Keeping the Faith*; *Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*; *The Knick*; *Bored to Death*. He is a proud artistic member of the Ensemble Studio Theatre. More info at JonathanRandellSilver.com.

Connor Sullivan is very excited to virtually return to La Jolla Playhouse with this joyful show! Most recently: *And Then They Came For Me* (MainStreet Theater); *How High the Moon* (La Jolla Playhouse WOW Festival); *Angels in America* (Cygnet Theatre); *The Three Musketeers* (PVPA); *Othello*, *Two Noble Kinsmen* (Kingsmen Shakespeare). Other Regional: The Old Globe, San Diego Repertory Theatre, New Fortune Theatre Company, MOXIE Theatre. He holds a B.A. in both Theatre and Communication Studies from USD and trained at the MCIT Studio in San Diego as well as the Summer Training Congress at A.C.T. @itsconnorsullivan.

Edred Utomi currently stars as Alexander Hamilton in the musical *Hamilton*. After graduating from the University of San Diego in 2013, he worked professionally in many Southern California theatres (Moonlight, 3DT, Old Globe, etc.) for five years before moving and setting up shop in New York City. You can follow all of his adventures on Instagram. @edredutomi

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 52 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.

La Jolla Playhouse Digital Without Walls (WOW) Projects

Ancient

By Mike Sears and Lisa Berger

La Jolla Playhouse Commission

Available May 14

This Playhouse-commissioned video installation explores the relationship between repetition and meditation, the routine and the ancient. With an original score composed by Shawn Rohlf for cello, piano and guitar, text by Rainer Maria Rilke, and a company of nine actors, *Ancient* invites the audience to observe an unfolding of day-to-day tasks that have been in play for centuries. An opportunity to experience nothing happening -- and everything happening. A reminder that we have been here before and that somehow, we go on.

Walks of Life

By Blindspot Collective

La Jolla Playhouse Commission

Four episodes May – July

Walks of Life is an original, Playhouse-commissioned work of auditory theatre featuring short scenes by playwrights and composers from across the country. In the midst of a pandemic that fractures and isolates our communities, this aural experience offers the opportunity to safely and imaginatively reconnect with each other by bearing witness to life's intimate moments captured entirely in sound. Participants experience the piece while walking independently through their own neighborhoods, and over the course of three 30-minute parts, they are introduced to characters and stories that might be unfolding in the homes around them.

BINGE

By Brian Lobel & Friends

June 30 – July 12

This one-on-one performance piece takes the solitary experience of binge-watching television shows and transforms it into an opportunity to find comfort in the lives of fictional characters. Tailor-made to fit the life of each individual audience member, the performance offers a live Zoom session with a personal artist companion, resulting in the prescription of a classic television episode to provide a little bit of solace at home. Leave your own drama behind, and insert yourself into a world where whatever the drama, it'll probably be solved in under 30 minutes.

The Totally Fake Latino News with Culture Clash

By Culture Clash

La Jolla Playhouse Commission

Six episodes June – August

The iconic Culture Clash offers 10-minute doses of levity, poetics and *payasadas* (clowning), from their homes and streets of SoCal and beyond, courtesy of the Chicano/Latinx Performance Trio, Richard Montoya, Ric Salinas and Herbert Siguenza. Watch them chronicle the isolation, joys and gut wrenching response to protests on the nation's streets against police brutality as they stand in fierce support for Black Lives Matter. Their fake news exists in a pandemic-ready format and can be very real.

Show Me A Good Time

By Gob Squad

World premiere co-produced and co-commissioned with HAU Hebbel am Ufer (Berlin)

June 20, 2020

Show Me A Good Time is a 12-hour, live-streamed international event that features nine performers streaming from all over Berlin – from inside an empty theatre, to private homes, to out on the city's streets – all combining into one live video. The show is set during the summer solstice at a moment when the pause button has been pressed on society, and everyone is stuck in a perpetual living selfie. Gob Squad artists reveal an alien world of habits, signs and symbols that once seemed to make sense but now only evokes a time already passed. Patrons can tune in for the full twelve hours or just check in periodically as Gob Squad marks each hour of the summer solstice in their signature improvisational style that blurs the boundaries of art, theatre and real life.

The Wizards of Oakwood Drive

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Portaleza

By David Israel Reynoso/Optika Moderna

La Jolla Playhouse Commission

September dates to be announced

What hope remains when one sends a message into the ether with no guarantee of a response? Much like the notion of sending a message in a bottle, *Portaleza* (derived from the words "portal" and "fortaleza," meaning strength/fortress) is a one-of-a-kind digital WOW experience created by David Israel Reynoso of Optika Moderna (WOW Festival's *Las Quinceañeras*, *Waking La Llorona*) that explores ideas of connection through desperate means of correspondence. After booking a visit with Optika Moderna's strange opticians, patrons will be mailed a mysterious package, which is to remain sealed until their appointed time. When the moment arrives, guests will discover that the humble contents of this parcel hold the key to unlocking a reality beyond their realm of imagination; a customized experience in response to what they do next.

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