

**LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE ANNOUNCES CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM
FOR 2019 PERFORMANCE OUTREACH PROGRAM
(POP) TOUR: *LIGHT YEARS AWAY***

***Playhouse Continues 30+ Year Tradition of Commissioning Work for Young
Audiences With New Play by Laura Schellhardt***

***Production to tour San Diego County schools January 30 - March 30; Public
performances at the Playhouse March 9 & 10***

La Jolla, CA – **La Jolla Playhouse** announces the cast and creative team for its 2019 Performance Outreach Program (POP) Tour production, ***Light Years Away***, by **Laura Schellhardt**, directed by Playhouse Artistic Programs Manager **Jacole Kitchen**. The production will tour schools throughout San Diego County January 30 – March 30. Commissioned by the Playhouse, this world-premiere play for young audiences will also have four public performances on **March 9 & 10, 2019** at **1:00pm** and **3:00pm** at the Playhouse.

The cast features **Amanda Arbués-Gille** (POP Tour production of *#SuperShinySara*) as *Carina*, **Ciarlene Coleman** as *Ida*, **Nicole Marie McEntee** as *Cal* and **Wilfred Paloma** as *Leo*.

The creative team includes **Laura Schellhardt**, playwright; **Jacole Kitchen**, director; **Sean Fanning**, scenic designer; **Michelle Hunt Souza**, scenic designer; **Melanie Chen-Cole**, sound designer; **Blake McCarty**, video designer; **Shirley Fishman**, dramaturg; and **Sebastian Perfetto**, stage manager.

The year is 2068. Having discovered a new inhabitable planet named YOLO 6, NASA sponsors a contest to discover who should be chosen to live on this new world, and three 5th graders are up for the challenge! They embark on a storytelling journey, learning about the real problems, as well as the real beauty in their current world and what they think should be created in the next. Through their new-found friendship, this individual mission turns them into a team of thinkers ready to lift off on a new path. Audiences will get an opportunity to decide who gets to go to YOLO 6, launching them on their own voyage to dream bigger and celebrate teamwork.

“This year’s POP Tour production is a wonderfully original and smart new play that explores the challenge of moving beyond your comfort zone and into an incredible new world of possibility,” said **Playhouse Artistic Director Christopher Ashley**. “Thanks to its humor, wit and lively characters, ***Light Years Away*** conveys relatable and compelling messages about taking pride in what makes us individuals, the importance of teamwork and imagination, respect for our environment, and the impact kids can have in charting a course for the future.”

The Playhouse is one of the few theatres in the country that annually commissions world-class artists to create a bold new play for young audiences. Playwrights create an innovative, 45-minute piece that addresses issues in students’ lives. Last year’s POP Tour, ***Home of the Brave***, was seen by nearly **20,000** young people, teachers and families.

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“For over 30 years, the POP Tour has been at the heart of our education and outreach programming. It is incredibly motivating to realize, as each season comes and goes, that this commitment to new work and to theatre for young audiences is as much a part of our mission as it ever was. It’s just as heartening to remember that what we do extends to tens of thousands of students annually – many of whom have never seen a play before,” said **Playhouse Director of Education and Outreach Julia Cuppy**.

Launched in 1987, the POP Tour travels throughout the county, touring schools, libraries and community centers. The set, costumes and props are designed to fit into a 16-foot truck and, in just 60 minutes, can be unloaded, placed in any space and be ready for children to experience. Prior to each performance, a Playhouse teaching artist visits each school to engage students in an interactive workshop to explore issues and themes at the core of the play. The Playhouse also provides schools with a standards-based engagement guide that enables educators to integrate the play into their existing curriculum. After each performance, the cast and crew conduct a question and answer session with the audience.

La Jolla Playhouse offers the **Adopt-A-School** program which provides funding for POP Tour performances at schools that could not otherwise afford it. With the help of the theatre’s Education Committee, Playhouse Board members Judy Smith and Barbara ZoBell created the Adopt-A-School program for those who love theatre and feel no child should be without its transformative power. For more information, contact Cristina Hernandez at chernandez@ljp.org.

Tickets to the public performances on March 9 & 10 are now on sale at LaJollaPlayhouse.org. For more information about booking the POP Tour for a school performance, please contact Bridget Cavaiola at bcavaiola@ljp.org.

BIOGRAPHIES

Laura Schellhardt (Playwright) is a Chicago-based playwright whose original works include *Ever in the Glades*, *The Comparables*, *Upright Grand*, *Air Guitar High*, *Auctioning the Ainsleys*, *The Apothecary’s Daughter*, *The K of D*, *Courting Vampires* and *Shapeshifter*. Adaptations include *The Phantom Tollbooth* and *The Outfit*. She is also the author of *Screenwriting for Dummies*. Her work has been produced at TheatreWorks Palo Alto, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Trinity Repertory Company, People’s Light Theatre, The Magic Theatre, Woolly Mammoth Theatre, Boston Court Theatre, ACT Seattle, Northlight Theatre, among others. Schellhardt is a recipient of the TCG National Playwriting Residency, the Jerome Fellowship, ACT’s New Play Award, the Best New Play Award NYC Fringe, The AATE Distinguished Play Award, and a Dramatist Guild Playwriting Fellowship. Her work has been developed at the SoHo Rep. Writer/Director Lab, The Ojai Playwright’s Conference, The Denver New Play Summit, The Bay Area Theatre Festival, Women Playwrights Festival at SRT, The Kennedy Center New Voices/New Visions Festival, The Bonderman Symposium, Stage Left Theatre Residency, The Goodman Theatre Playwrights Unit, and the O’Neill National Playwright’s Festival. Schellhardt received her M.F.A. in playwriting from Brown University. She currently heads the undergraduate playwriting program at Northwestern University and is a Victory Gardens ensemble playwright.

Jacole Kitchen (Director) is the Artistic Programs Manager and Local Casting Director at La Jolla Playhouse, spearheading numerous community based programs. In addition, she teaches acting, improv and professional development for actors through UCSD Extension. Directing credits include, *Cardboard Piano* (Diversionary Theatre), *An Iliad* (New Village Arts) and *September and Her Sisters* (Scripps Ranch Theatre – Ooal New Play Festival). Assistant directing credits include *Tiger Style!* and *Guards at the Taj* (La Jolla Playhouse), *HONKY*, *The Oldest Boy* and *Detroit* (San Diego Repertory Theatre). She currently sits on the board of directors for San Diego Performing Arts League (SDPAL).

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Amanda Arbués-Gille's (Carina) credits include Olivia in *Twelfth Night* (The Old Globe/Globe for All), Maya/Bella Blackthorn in *#SuperShinySara* (2016 La Jolla Playhouse POP Tour), Aspen in *El Largo Camino De Hoy* (South Coast Repertory/Diálogos Project) and Adelita in *La Adelita Americana* (Theatre Row/United Solo Theatre Festival). She holds a B.F.A. in Drama from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts and an M.F.A. in Theatre from Cal State Fullerton. www.amandaarbues.com

Ciarlene Coleman (Ida) has been seen performing around town most recently in *Guadalupe in the Guest Room* and *Avenue Q* (New Village Arts) and *The Secret Garden in Concert* (Barn Stage Company). She has also performed with San Diego Repertory Theater, American History Theater, and SeaWorld. Coleman is also founding Co-Artistic Director of MaArte Theatre Collective, a new, nationally-recognized organization representing Filipino-American theatre artists in San Diego. She currently studies with the Meisner Chekhov Integrative Technique Studio. A graduate from the Music Department at UC San Diego, Coleman also composes original music, both for and off the stage. www.ciarlene.com

Nicole Marie McEntee's (Cal) credits include Nina in *In the Heights*, Brooke Wyndham in *Legally Blonde* and Ayah in *The Secret Garden*. Additionally, she has worked with San Diego Repertory Theatre, The Barn Stage Company, Legoland and more. When she's not performing/directing, McEntee can be found coloring and watching *The Little Mermaid*. She is a child at heart and is passionate about encouraging youth involvement in the arts.

Wilfred Paloma (Leo) is in the final semester of the M.A. Theatre Arts program at San Diego State University where he holds a B.A. in Theatre Performance: Acting and Musical Theatre. He works as a teaching artist at the California Center of the Arts, Young Actor's Theater, and San Diego Junior Theatre. Past performance credits: Blindspot Collective, Playwright's Project and SeaWorld. Upcoming performances: New Village Arts Theatre: *Smokey Joe's Café* and *Bella: An American Tall Tale*. Listen to him on Spotify and iTunes on the original cast recording of "The Things We Never Say," featured on the track "Coronado Lights."

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. Renowned for its development of new plays and musicals, the Playhouse has mounted 98 world premieres, commissioned 52 new works, and sent 32 productions to Broadway – among them the currently-running hit musical *Come From Away* – garnering a total of 38 Tony Awards, plus the 1993 Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre.

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FACT SHEET

What: **2019 Performance Outreach Program (POP) Tour: *Light Years Away***

By Laura Schellhardt

Directed by Jacole Kitchen

When: Touring Dates: January 30 – March 30, 2019 at schools across San Diego County
Public Performances at the Playhouse: March 9 & 10 at 1:00pm & 3:00pm

Cast:

Amanda Arbués-Gille	<i>Carina</i>
Ciarlene Coleman	<i>Ida</i>
Nicole Marie McEntee	<i>Cal</i>
Wilfred Paloma	<i>Leo</i>

Creative: Scenic Designer: Sean Fanning
Costume Designer: Michelle Hunt Souza
Sound Designer: Melanie Chen-Cole
Video Designer: Blake McCarty
Stage Manager: Sebastian Perfetto

About: The year is 2068. Having discovered a new inhabitable planet named YOLO 6, NASA sponsors a contest to discover who should be chosen to live on this new world, and three 5th graders are up for the challenge! They embark on a storytelling journey, learning about the real problems, as well as the real beauty in their current world and what they think should be created in the next. Through their newfound friendship, this individual mission turns them into a team of thinkers ready to lift off on a new path. Audiences will get an opportunity to decide who gets to go to YOLO 6, launching them on their own voyage to dream bigger and celebrate teamwork.

Booking: For information about booking the POP Tour for a school performance, please contact Bridget Cavaiola at bcavaiola@ljp.org. For more information about the Adopt-A-School program, please contact Cristina Hernandez at chernandez@ljp.org.

Tickets/Info: LaJollaPlayhouse.org or (858) 550-1010. Tickets are \$9 (12 and under); \$12 (adults).

La Jolla Playhouse Education & Outreach Programs are supported by the generosity of numerous corporate, government and foundation entities.

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