

LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE ANNOUNCES CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM FOR WORLD PREMIERE OF *THE LUCKIEST*

DEVELOPED AS PART OF 2018 DNA NEW WORK SERIES,
NEW PLAY BY MELISSA ROSS TO FEATURE DEIRDRE LOVEJOY,
ALEQUE REID AND REGGIE D. WHITE

La Jolla, CA – La Jolla Playhouse announces the cast and creative team for its world-premiere production of *The Luckiest*, by **Melissa Ross**, directed by former Playhouse Associate Artistic Director **Jaime Castañeda**, running in the Playhouse's Sheila and Hughes Potiker Theatre **June 30 – July 28** (press opening: Sunday, July 8 at 7:00pm).

The cast features **Deirdre Lovejoy** (TV's *The Wire*) as "Cheryl," **Aleque Reid** (Lincoln Center Theatre's *Domesticated*) as "Lisette" and **Reggie D. White** (Playhouse's *Hundred Days*, *The Last Tiger in Haiti*) as "Peter."

The creative team includes **Tim Mackabee** (Broadway's *The Elephant Man*), Set Designer; **Denitsa Bliznakova** (Playhouse's *Queens*, *The Cake*), Costume Designer; **Lap Chi Chu** (Playhouse's *The Year to Come*, *Queens*, and many others), Lighting Designer; **Ryan Rumery** (Playhouse's *Peer Gynt*), Sound Designer and Composer; **Telsey + Company – Karyn Casl, C.S.A.**, Casting; **Gabriel Greene**, Dramaturg and **Anjee Nero**, Stage Manager.

"We're delighted to welcome Jaime back to the Playhouse, reuniting with Melissa Ross on *The Luckiest*, developed during 2018's DNA New Work Series. With this terrific cast and creative team, Melissa's touching piece will make us appreciate our family – as well as the friends who become our family in times of difficulty – in a deeply affirmational story about how we choose to live," said **Christopher Ashley**, the Rich Family Artistic Director of La Jolla Playhouse.

Lisette is a vibrant, independent woman who lives on her own terms. But when a sudden diagnosis changes life as she knows it, she must navigate the strong opinions of her mother and her best friend as she resolutely forges her own path for her future. Facing her new reality with a healthy dose of humor and heartened by the love of her friends and family, Lisette's journey reminds us of the power in each of us to take ownership of our lives. *The Luckiest* is an affecting, thought-provoking and deeply affirmational story of how we live and love.

The Luckiest was featured as part of the Playhouse's acclaimed **DNA New Work Series**, which offers playwrights the opportunity to develop a script and receive valuable audience feedback. Numerous Playhouse productions have been developed through the DNA New Work Series, including *Kill Local*, *What Happens Next*, *Miss You Like Hell*, *The Last Tiger in Haiti*, *Blueprints to Freedom*, *The Who & The What* and *Chasing the Song*.

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Deirdre Lovejoy's Broadway credits include Nora Ephron's *Lucky Guy*, starring Tom Hanks, *Six Degrees of Separation*, *The Gathering*, *Getting and Spending*. Off-Broadway she appeared in the original production of *How I Learned to Drive*. She has appeared in over 100 plays and episodes of television, including *The Wire*, *The Blacklist*, *NCIS*, *The West Wing*, *Girls*, *Bones* and the upcoming *Raising Dion* (Netflix, October). Film credits include *The Post*, *Step Up*, *I Am Elizabeth Smart* (Wanda Barzee). She is currently developing her solo play *Bird Elephant China*. More at DeirdreLovejoy.com.

Aleque Reid's Off-Broadway credits include *Domesticated* (Lincoln Center Theatre); *All's Well That Ends Well* (Public Theater); *Nobody Loves You* (Second Stage); *Really, Really* (MCC). National Tour: *Hair* (Jeanie). Her television and film credits include *Dying Up Here*, *Doubt*, *Insidious - The Final Key*, *A Simple Wedding*. Voice over work includes *Trolls: The Beat Goes On*, *Captain Underpants*, *Dragon Rescue Riders*, *Pitch Perfect*.

Reggie D. White appeared in La Jolla Playhouse's productions of *Hundred Days* and *The Last Tiger in Haiti*. Off-Broadway credits include *Hundred Days*, *I & You* and *For the Last Time*. Regionally he has appeared in *The Bluest Eye* (Arden Theatre); *Eddie the Marvelous...*(O'Neill); *Blues for Mr. Charlie* (The Williams Project) and *Party People* (Berkeley Rep). White's film and television credits include *Blindspot*, *The Parent 'Hood*, *Rebound*; *Buzzer*, *Medias Res*. White is a founding company member of The Williams Project – a living wage theatre company. He is also a recipient of the TCG Fox Fellowship and NAACP Award Nominee. reggiedwhite.net

Melissa Ross' plays include *Thinner Than Water*, *A Life Extra Ordinary*, *Nice Girl*, *Of Good Stock*, *An Entomologist's Love Story* and *Thinner Than Water* is included in the anthology "New Playwrights: Best Plays of 2011" by Smith and Kraus. *Nice Girl* was a finalist for the Francesca Primus Prize and is in Applause's *Best Plays of 2015*. *An Entomologist's Love Story* is an Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Commission and an Edgerton New Play Award recipient. Ross' plays have been developed and produced around the country at theaters including: Dorset Theatre Festival, The Gift Theatre, Iama Theatre Company, Kitchen Dog Theater, LABYrith Theater Company, LCT3, Manhattan Theatre Club, New York Stage and Film, The New Group, Raven Theatre, South Coast Repertory, Rattlestick Playwrights Theater, Summer Shorts and TheatreWorks Palo Alto. She has been twice commissioned by both South Coast Repertory and Manhattan Theatre Club. Ross is a graduate of Bennington College and the Lila Acheson Wallace Playwriting Program at The Juilliard School, a two-time winner of the Le Comte de Nouy Prize and a proud member of LABYrith Theater Company.

Jaime Castañeda served as La Jolla Playhouse's Associate Artistic Director from 2014 to 2018, where he directed Will Power's *Seize the King*, Rachel Bonds' *At the Old Place*, Mike Lew's *Tiger Style!* and Rajiv Joseph's *Guards at the Taj*. Other productions include *Vietgone* (American Conservatory Theatre), *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity* by Kristoffer Diaz (Dallas Theater Center), *Chimichangas and Zoloft* by Fernanda Coppel (Atlantic Theater Company), *How We Got On* by Idris Goodwin (Cleveland Playhouse), *The Royale* by Marco Ramirez (American Theater Company), *Welcome to Arroyo's* by Kristoffer Diaz (The Old Globe) and *Red Light Winter* by Adam Rapp (Perseverance Theatre). He has also developed new plays with the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, Rattlestick Theater, Portland Center Stage, Denver Center Theater, The Kennedy Center and the Atlantic Theater Company, where he spent five seasons as Artistic Associate. A Drama League Fellow, Castañeda is the recipient of a Princess Grace Award and a TCG New Generations Grant. He holds an M.F.A. in Directing from The University of Texas at Austin.

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FACT SHEET

WHAT: *The Luckiest*
By Melissa Ross
Directed by Jaime Castañeda

WHEN: **June 30 – July 28** (Press Opening: Sunday, July 7 at 7:00pm)
Tue/Wed at 7:30pm; Thu/Fri/Sat at 8pm; Sun at 7pm; Sat/Sun at 2pm

WHERE: **Sheila and Hughes Potiker Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse**
2910 La Jolla Village Drive, La Jolla, CA 92037

WHO: Scenic Designer: Tim Mackabee
Costume Designer: Denitsa Bliznakova
Lighting Designer: Lap Chi Chu
Sound Designer and Composer: Ryan Rumery
Casting: Telsey + Company – Karyn Casl, C.S.A.
Dramaturg: Gabriel Greene
Stage Manager: Anjee Nero

Cast:	<i>Cheryl</i>	Deirdre Lovejoy
	<i>Lisette</i>	Aleque Reid
	<i>Peter</i>	Reggie D. White

BACKGROUND:

Lisette is a vibrant and fiercely independent young woman. But when a sudden diagnosis shatters her world into pieces, she finds herself at odds with her mother and her best friend, who each come bearing strong opinions wrapped in good intentions. With an overwhelming amount of choices to make in a very short amount of time, Lisette is forced to navigate between the two while unflinchingly forging her own path for her future. Developed during the Playhouse's 2018 DNA New Work Series, *The Luckiest* is a tender, funny and keenly-observed world-premiere play that explores the uncertain and sometimes heartbreaking territory of how we choose to take ownership of our lives.

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

SPONSORS: Illumina, La Cuisine, Larry and Robin Rusinko,
The Paula Marie Black Endowment for Women's Voices in the Art of Theatre

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 Christopher Ashley, the Rich Family Artistic Director of La Jolla Playhouse, and Managing Director Debby Buchholz. Playhouse artists and audiences have taken part in the development of new plays and musicals, including mounting 102 world premieres, commissioning 52 new works, and sending 32 productions to Broadway – including the currently-running hit musical *Come From Away* – garnering a total of 38 Tony Awards, as well as the 1993 Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre. For more information, visit LaJollaPlayhouse.org.