

## LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE'S 2022 PERFORMANCE OUTREACH PROGRAM (POP) TOUR: HOOPLA! TO TOUR SCHOOLS THROUGHOUT APRIL, PLUS FREE PUBLIC PERFORMANCES AT WOW FESTIVAL

### *PLAYHOUSE CONTINUES 30+ YEAR TRADITION OF COMMISSIONING WORK FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES WITH NEW PLAY BY CHERYL L. WEST*

La Jolla, CA – La Jolla Playhouse announces the tour of its 2022 Performance Outreach Program (POP) Tour production, *Hoopla!*, by Cheryl L. West, directed by Delicia Turner Sonnenberg (The Garden, POP Tour production of #SuperShinySara). This delightful new play for young audiences will tour San Diego county elementary schools throughout April. The Playhouse will also present two free public performances of *Hoopla!* at the WOW Festival on April 23 and 24 at 11:00am at ARTS DISTRICT Liberty Station.

The cast features Jaeonnie Davis-Crawford as “Gina,” Joy Yvonne Jones as “Sylvie/Brandy/ Ellen,” Austyn Myers (Playhouse’s Kingdom City) as “Big Win/Randy,” Alexis Park as “Elliott,” Shaun Tuazon (POP Tour production of #SuperShinySara) as “Winston.”

The *Hoopla!* creative team includes Jonathan Gilmer, Scenic Designer; Carmon Amon, Costume Designer; Eliza Vedar, Sound Designer; Sonia Desai, Dramaturg; Valentina Orbit, Hula Hoop consultant; and Evelyn Myers, Stage Manager.

In *Hoopla!*, the fifth grade talent show is approaching, and everyone is abuzz at Baldwin Elementary. Winston wants to win the talent show with his cheerleading routine to prove to others that he’s more than the unfriendly “Fishboy” nickname they call him. Introverted artist Gina wants nothing to do with the talent show, and she knows that the overzealous (and generally unpleasant) twin sensations, Randy and Brandy, are probably going to win it all anyway. But with the persistence of Elliott, the school’s new kid and resident rebel, these unlikely friends form *Hoopla*, a dazzling hula hooping trio, and help each other navigate through the pressures of being a kid.

“It’s a joy to return to an in-person POP Tour this year, continuing the Playhouse’s commitment to bringing live theatre into San Diego schools. For over 30 years, the POP Tour has been at the heart of our Learning and Engagement programming, and *Hoopla!* is yet another wonderfully original and heartwarming new piece that delves into challenges elementary school students face every day,” said Christopher Ashley, the Rich Family Artistic Director of La Jolla Playhouse.

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. Launched in 1987, the POP Tour has been bringing theatre into schools for more than 30 years.

This year’s POP Tour will tour throughout April, and will also be made available in a [virtual](#) format as a 45-minute film, which will be available to schools free of charge. In addition, teacher and students will have access to a standards-based virtual E-guide which will include lesson plans centering on the show’s themes, along with pre- and post-show engagement activities that educators can integrate into their existing curriculum.

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### Artist Biographies

**Jaeonnie Davis-Crawford** (*Gina*) is a San Diego actor and director. She graduated from San Diego State University with a B.A. in general theatre arts. Credits include: *Safa's Story* (Imagine/Blindspot Collective), *kNOW MORE* (PLNU's Center for Justice and Reconciliation), *Connecting Flights* (Blindspot Collective), *Blackademics* (Trinity Theatre Company, reading), *The Two Musketeers* (Trinity Theatre Company), *Julius Caesar* (San Diego State University) and *The Trojan Incident* (Dir. Tug Watson). Jaeonnie is also an artistic associate of Patchwork Theatre Company.

Originally from Houston, **Joy Yvonne Jones** (*Sylvie/Brandy/Ellen*) attended The High School for the Performing and Visual Arts and went on to study at the University of Minnesota in the Guthrie Theatre B.F.A. Actor Training Program in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Joy is a recipient of the San Diego Critics Circle Craig Noel Award for Outstanding Featured Performance in a Play for her performance of Saartjie Baartman in *Voyeurs de Venus* at Moxie Theatre. Her most recent credits include Cherise Howard in *Flex* at The Humana Festival of New American Plays at Actors Theatre of Louisville, Isabelle in *Ring 'Round the Moon* at Lambs Players Theatre, Zuzu in *Dance Nation* and Jane in Kate Hamill's adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*. She is an accomplished playwright and poet as well as the President of the San Diego Black Artist Collective. Joy is a creative hurricane working on the revolution at the speed of inspiration with her baby boy Leo James on her hip.

**Austyn Myers** (*Big Win/Randy*) is honored to be returning to theatre, playing Randy and Big Win in this production of Hoopla! Broadway: *Les Miserables*. TV/Film; *Meet Dave*, *Team Spitz*, *Moon Rocks* and *Lighter Fluid*. Regional: *Kingdom City* (La Jolla Playhouse); *October Sky*, *Brighton Beach Memoirs*, *Lost in Yonkers*, *The First Wives Club* (The Old Globe); *Lost in Yonkers*, *Newsies* (McCoy Rigby Entertainment); *The Secret Garden* (Lambs Players); *Spring Awakening*, *Peter and the Starcatcher*, *Secret Garden* (Barnstage Theatre).

**Alexis Park** (*Elliott*) is a Los Angeles-based actress and voice over artist. She is also the founder and co-artistic director of Recover Me, an International Mental Health Awareness Film Festival. Some of her favorite credits include: the staged reading of *Laughs in Spanish* (Amigos Del Rep, Latinx New Play Festival), *UN* (TuYo Theatre) and *Julius Caesar* (San Diego State University). Her voice can be heard as Rita in the English dub of the Netflix Original Series, *Summertime: Season 2!* B.A. in Theatre Performance, San Diego State University.

**Shaun Tuazon** (*Winston*) is an actor, designer, and donut enthusiast originally from the San Francisco Bay Area. Favorite credits: *Vietgone*, *House of Joy* (San Diego Rep); *#SuperShinySara* (La Jolla Playhouse); *Mamma Mia* (East West Players); *The Emperor's Nightingale* (Lewis Family Playhouse); *In the Heights* (Cabrillo Music Theatre); *Girlfriend* (Craig Noel Award Nom.), *Dooley*, *Altar Boyz* (Diversionsary Theatre); *RENT*, *Joseph... Dreamcoat* (SDMT); *Deconstruction of a Drag Queen* (Craig Noel Award Nom.); *Zanna, Don't!* (SD Premiere), *The 25th Annual... Spelling Bee* (Intrepid Theatre); as well as productions/readings with The Old Globe, Lamb's Players, New Village Arts, Cygnet Theatre, Breakthrough Workshop, Ion and more. BA in Theatre Arts, SDSU. [ShaunTuazon.com](http://ShaunTuazon.com) #ShaunsDonuts

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**Cheryl L. West's** (Playwright) plays include *FANNIE: The Music and Life of Fannie Lou Hamer*, *Last Stop on Market Street*, *Shout Sister Shout*, *Akeelah and the Bee*, *Pullman Porter Blues* and *Jar the Floor*. Her plays have been produced in England, off-Broadway, on Broadway (*Play On!*) and in numerous regional theaters around the country, including Seattle Rep, Arena Stage, Old Globe, The Goodman Theatre, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Minneapolis Children's Theatre, Seattle Children's Theatre, Chicago Children's Theatre, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Indiana Rep, Asolo Rep, Merrimack, Arkansas Rep, St. Louis Black Rep, Bay Street Theatre Festival, Syracuse Stage, Cleveland Play House, South Coast Rep, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park and Off-Broadway's Manhattan Theatre Club and Second Stage. She has written TV and film projects at Disney, Paramount, MTV Films, Showtime, TNT, HBO, CBS, BET and is the Webby-nominated writer for the original web series *Diary of a Single Mom*. Ms. West is currently preparing a revival of Broadway-bound *Jar the Floor*, and working on commissions for Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Minneapolis Children's Theater, the Goodman Theatre and Seattle Rep. [www.cheryllwest.com](http://www.cheryllwest.com)

**Delicia Turner Sonnenberg** (Director) 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. In addition to MOXIE, Delicia has directed plays for La Jolla Playhouse (*The Garden*, *POP Tour - #Super Shiny Sara*, *WoW Festival - The Car Plays SD*, *Counterweight*), The Old Globe Theatre, Actors Theatre of Louisville Humana Festival, San Diego REP, Cygnet Theatre, New Village Arts, Diversionary Theatre, Mo'olelo Performing Arts Company, and Playwrights Project among others. She was twice a recipient of the Van Lier Directing Fellowship through Second Stage Theatre in New York, and is an alumna of the New York Drama League's Directors Program as well as TCG's New Generations Program.

**Jonathan Gilmer** (Scenic Designer) is a San Diego-based multidisciplinary theatre artist. Recent projects include *The Rady Shell at Jacobs Park Ribbon Cutting Ceremony* (San Diego Symphony), *Pick Me Last* (La Jolla Playhouse), *Noel Noel* (San Diego Symphony), *As One* (San Diego Opera), *The North Plan* (ION Theatre), *Shostakovich Day* (Barbican Centre), *Whistleblower* (Waterloo East Theatre) and was a member of the design team for the UK Student Exhibit at the 2015 Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space. Jonathan is also the Associate Technical Director at La Jolla Playhouse. He received his B.A. Honours in Technical Theatre Arts from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London.

**Carmen Amon** (Costume Designer) is a proud Queer Chicax Costume Designer in the Greater San Diego area. She has been working professionally as a Freelance Costume Designer since 2016. She graduated the same year with a Bachelor's Degree in Theater with an Emphasis in Costume Design from San Diego State University. Her designs have been featured at La Jolla Playhouse, San Diego Repertory Theater, MOXIE Theater, Junior Theater and Pacific Ridge School.

**Eliza Vedar** (Sound Designer) is a composer, sound designer, music director, and pianist. Her original music/arrangements have been featured in productions with TuYo Theatre, Moxie Theatre and the Amigos del Rep. She has written music for three original musicals during her undergrad (*Araceli of the West*, *Despierta!*, *Way of the Witch*). Eliza is currently pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Piano Performance at SDSU and is Artist in Residence at CSU San Marcos Theatre Arts for the 2021-2022 school year. [www.elizavedar.com/](http://www.elizavedar.com/)

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**Sonia Desai**, PhD (Dramaturg), is scholar, dramaturg, and director. She currently teaches theatre at Loyola Marymount University and CSU San Marcos. Her scholarship focuses on issues of gender and sexuality in performance and Renaissance drama. In the past, she has worked as a dramaturg on new plays for theatre companies such as San Diego Repertory Theatre and Company of Angels in Los Angeles. She most recently directed Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* for Shakespeare on the Bluff.

**Valentina Orbit** (Hula Hoop Consultant) grew up belly dancing with her mom Leela and their teacher Mesmera from the age of 12. During her first Burning Man festival in 2007, she was entranced with the hula hoopers and fire dancers and vowed to learn how to do both! A year of hooping allowed her body confidence to soar and she was inspired to perform Hoop Burlesque. She quickly landed herself on national television, HBO's "Live Nude Comedy." In 2015 she married Steve Bags, Hooping.org's 2013 "Male Hooper of the Year." Together they formed Twisted Orbit and have since traveled the world performing and teaching. She has also added hoop fabrication, juggling, stilt walking, teaching yoga and large-scale show production to her repertoire. [unityhoops.com](http://unityhoops.com)

**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 more than 60 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.

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## FACT SHEET

- What:** 2022 Performance Outreach Program (POP) Tour: Hoopla!  
World-Premiere; La Jolla Playhouse Commission  
By Cheryl L. West; Directed by Delicia Turner Sonnenberg
- When:** Touring Elementary Schools throughout April, 2022  
Free public performances at WOW Festival April 23 and 24 at 11am  
Website: [pop-tour-lajollaplayhouse-2022.com](http://pop-tour-lajollaplayhouse-2022.com)
- To Stream:** <https://www.pop-tour-lajollaplayhouse-2022.com/watch-online>
- Cast:** Jaeonnie Davis-Crawford as *Gina*  
Bibi Mama as *Sylvie/Brandy/Ellen*  
Austyn Myers as *Big Win/Randy*  
Alexis Park as *Elliott*  
Shaun Tuazon as *Winston*
- Creative:** Scenic Designer: Jonathan Gilmer  
Costume Designer: Carmen Amon  
Sound Designer: Eliza Vedar  
Dramaturg: Sonia Desai  
Hula Hoop Consultant: Valentina Orbit  
Stage Manager: Evelyn Myers
- Booking:** For information about booking the POP Tour, visit [www.pop-tour-lajollaplayhouse-2022.com](http://www.pop-tour-lajollaplayhouse-2022.com).
- La Jolla Playhouse also offers the Adopt-A-School program which provides funding for POP Tour performances at schools that could not otherwise afford it. For more information, contact Keely Daximillion at [kdaximillion@ljp.org](mailto:kdaximillion@ljp.org).
- Sponsors:** La Jolla Playhouse is able to offer the POP Tour to the community at no cost to them due to the generous support we receive from both individuals and institutions whose donations cover the cost of all expenses. We are pleased to thank the following corporate, foundation and government entities for their sponsorship of Hoopla!
- Corporate support provided by Bank of America, The Morrison Foerster Foundation, Nordson, Professional Maintenance Systems, Qualcomm, ResMed Foundation, Sempra, Union Bank, US Bank and Viasat.
- Government support provided by the City of San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture, the City of Encinitas Community Grant Program, and the County of San Diego.
- Foundation support provided by The Samuel I. and John Henry Fox Foundation, The Pratt Memorial Fund and the San Diego Scottish Rite Community Foundation.

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