

LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE'S 2023 PERFORMANCE OUTREACH PROGRAM (POP) TOUR: *JIN VS. THE BEACH* TO TOUR SCHOOLS MARCH – APRIL, WITH FREE PUBLIC PERFORMANCES AT 2023 WOW FESTIVAL

PLAYHOUSE CONTINUES 30+ YEAR TRADITION OF COMMISSIONING WORK FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES WITH NEW PLAY BY MIN KAHNG

La Jolla, CA – La Jolla Playhouse announces the tour of its 2022 Performance Outreach Program (POP) Tour production, *Jin vs. the Beach*, by **Min Kahng**, directed by Playhouse Director of Engagement and In-House Casting **Jacole Kitchen** (POP Tour production of *Pick Me Last*). This delightful new play for young audiences will tour San Diego county elementary schools throughout March and April. The Playhouse will also present two free public performances of *Jin vs. the Beach* on **April 29** and **30** as part of the 2023 WOW Festival, presented in association with the San Diego Symphony at the Rady Shell at Jacobs Park.

The cast features **Kailey Agpaoa** as “Cora,” **Alyssa Anne Austin** as “Teacher Ria,” **Kaia Bugler** as “Jin” and **TaiReikca L.A.** as “Ranger Irv.”

The *Jin vs. the Beach* creative team includes **Desha Crownover**, Music Director; **Jonathan Gilmer**, Scenic Designer; **Keira McGee**, Costume Designer; **Eliza Vedar**, Sound Designer; **Madison Mae Williams**, Dramaturg; and **Evelyn Myers**, Stage Manager.

In *Jin vs. the Beach*, a new musical play, fifth grader Jin is headed to the beach for the very first time on a class field trip. Jin is more comfortable spending his time indoors, playing his favorite game, CUBECRAFTIA. Even though Jin grew up in San Diego, going to the beach is something new to him. He’s a bit anxious about it, but with the support of friends, teachers, and his imagination, Jin learns that everyone has different feelings when it comes to approaching the unknown and that it is important to express those feelings, and try new things even when they feel scary.

“For more than three decades, the POP Tour has been at the heart of our Learning and Engagement programming, and *Jin vs. the Beach!* 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.

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 musicals *Jersey Boys* and *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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Artist Biographies

Kailey Agpaoa (Cora; she/they) is a multi-hyphenate artist. Born in Aiea, Hawaii and raised in Yokosuka, Japan, she spent her young adulthood with the unique experience of performing on two continents. She couldn't be more grateful to be making her debut with La Jolla Playhouse. She extends even more gratitude to her family, friends, and partner for their never-ending support. Theatre Credits: *Hand to God*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Spring Awakening* (Tokyo International Players); Lit: *A New Musical* (Blindspot Collective); *Jekyll and Hyde*, *Assassins* (Wildsong Productions).

Alyssa Anne Austin (Teacher Ria) is an actor, author & creative entrepreneur. As an actor, she has worked throughout San Diego since reconnecting with her love of performing in 2016, including at La Jolla Playhouse, Cygnet Theatre, San Diego Musical Theatre, San Diego Rep, Oceanside Theatre Company, and LEGOLAND California, as well as numerous on-camera & commercial projects. She debuted her one-woman show, *Always a Banana, Never the Bride: An Ode to Broadway's "Lesser Ladies,"* this past October to rave reviews. When not performing, Alyssa coaches others to success through her company, PoisedandProfessional.com. "Being brave is not the same as having no fear!" AlyssaAnneAustin.com @alyssaanneaustin

Kaia Bugler (Jin) is thrilled to be making his La Jolla Playhouse debut as Jin in *Jin vs. The Beach* with this incredible company! His previous credits include Nicky in *Noel Noel* (San Diego Symphony); Dennis in *All Shook Up*, Oliver Hix in *The Music Man*, Angel City 4 (Bass) in *City of Angels*, Orlando in *As You Like It* (Coronado School of the Arts); and Cat in The Hat in *Seussical!* (Vanguard). Kaia would like to thank his friends and family for always pushing him to be his best! IG: @kaiabugler.

TaiReikca L.A. (Ranger/Irv; they/them) is an actor, poet/writer, performance artists and stage manager; they are very excited to be a part of this amazing show! Recent credits include: Acting: Oliver in *As You Like It* (La Jolla Playhouse); Starra in *FLEX* (Hero Theater); Toshi in *Mud Row*, Roshni in *House of Joy* (San Diego Rep); MJ in *Black Pegasus* (The Old Globe); 1st Witch/McDuff in *Macbeth: The Unsex Me Project*, Stephanie in *Hands of Color* (OSF Midnight Projects); Yolanda in *Crowns* (Hattiloo Theater). Assistant Stage Management: *How to Catch Creation*, *Love's Labor's Lost*, *Hairspray*, *Henry V* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival). Originally from Indianapolis, IN, TaiReikca received their B.A. in Theatre Arts from Alabama State University and their M.F.A. in Stage Management from California Institute of the Arts. They are a member of the Actors' Equity Association and the Stage Managers' Association.

Min Kahng (Playwright; he/him) is an award-winning playwright, composer, lyricist and creative coach whose works include *The Adventures of Honey & Leon*, *The Four Immigrants: An American Musical Manga* (Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Award, Theatre Bay Area Award, Edgerton New Play Award, NAMT Production Grant), *GOLD: The Midas Musical* (Theatre Bay Area Award), Iris Lee's *Audio Odyssey* (published by Playscripts), *Inside Out & Back Again*, *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon: A Musical Adaptation*, *Bad Kitty On Stage!*, *The Song of the Nightingale* and *Tales of Olympus*. Kahng also wrote the NEA-funded project *Story Explorers*, an original musical for young audiences with autism. Kahng is an alumnus of MacDowell, Playwrights Foundation Resident Initiative, Berkeley Rep's Ground Floor, Djerassi, Willapa Bay AiR, and the TheatreWorks New Works Festival. He has been invited as a Guest Lecturer/Artist at Harvard University, Stanford University, UC Berkeley, San Jose State University and The San Francisco Conservatory of Music. Kahng is a Jonathan Larson Grant Finalist, a Richard Rodgers Award Finalist, and a Dramatists Guild committee member.

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Jacole Kitchen (Director) is Director of Arts Engagement and In-House Casting at La Jolla Playhouse. As the co-lead of the Learning and Engagement Department, Jacole helps to expand and nurture community partnerships and foster relationships throughout the greater San Diego community of artists. Directing credits: *Iron* (Roustabouts Theatre), *The Music Sounds Different to Me Now* (La Jolla Playhouse - WOW Festival), *Pick Me Last* and *Light Years Away* (La Jolla Playhouse POP Tour), *Cardboard Piano* (Diversionsary Theatre), *An Iliad* (New Village Arts), *September and Her Sisters* (Scripps Ranch Theatre – Out on a Limb) and more. In addition, Jacole is a private acting coach and serves as Executive Director for San Diego Performing Arts League (SDPAL). Previous positions: Casting Director and Artistic Associate for San Diego Rep, and bicoastal talent agent specializing in representation for professional theatre actors, directors and choreographers at Kazarian/Measures/Ruskin & Associates.

Desha Crownover (Music Director) is a stage and musical director specializing in Theatre for Young Audiences. She has had the opportunity to direct, teach, and perform across the country for the past twenty-five years where her work has been commended by such theatre notables as Edward Albee, Ming Cho Lee, Patricia Zipprodt, and Timothy Near. She holds a Master's degree in Theatre from SDSU and a B.A. in Theatre with an emphasis in Performing from UC San Diego and has served on the teaching faculty of SDSU, Cuyamaca College, and Santa Fe Christian Schools teaching music, acting, theatre history, public speaking, and speech and debate. Her work as a playwright has been produced at UCSD, SDSU, and Santa Fe Christian Schools, as well. Desha serves as the Artistic Director of San Diego Junior Theatre where she has taught and directed for the past twenty years.

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 Scenery Supervisor at La Jolla Playhouse. He received his B.A. Honours in Technical Theatre Arts from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London.

Keira McGee (Costume Designer) works in costume design and construction for both theater and film. Design credits include *Into the Woods* (New Village Arts), *The Servant of Two Masters* (New Village Arts), *Cabaret* (ION Theatre), *Iceman Cometh* (Target Margin Theatre), *Romeo and Juliet* (Shakespeare & Company), and *The Tempest* (Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival). Film credits; Production Assistant for *Top Gun: Maverick* (Paramount Pictures). Keira currently works in the costume department of La Jolla Playhouse, and runs her own sustainable clothing company called *Keira Designs*.

Eliza Vedar (Sound Designer) is a composer, sound designer, music director, and pianist. Her work has been featured in several productions throughout San Diego. She has written music for three original musicals during her undergrad with her collaborator Mario Vega. They are currently working on their fourth musical, *DayDreamer*. Eliza recently received a Bachelor's degree in Piano Performance at SDSU and was Artist in Residence at CSUSM during the 2021-2022 academic year.

Madison Mae Williams (Dramaturg) is a multidisciplinary artist and scholar based in San Diego. Born and raised on Cape Cod, she received her BA concentrating in musical theatre, poetry, and Africana studies from Hampshire College. Maddie is continuing her studies as a fifth year Theatre PhD candidate at UC San Diego. As a dramaturg, Maddie has worked with La Jolla Playhouse, the Old Globe, Cygnet Theatre, the New Cosmopolitans, the Playwrights Realm, Chautauqua Theatre Company, and the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center. She is passionate about theatre work that is accessible, radical, and increases visibility and representation for people of marginalized identities. Maddie is a proud member of the Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas and the Black Theatre Network. madisonmaewilliams.com

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FACT SHEET

WHAT: 2023 Performance Outreach Program (POP) Tour: *Jin vs. the Beach*
World-Premiere; La Jolla Playhouse Commission
By Min Kahng; Directed by Jacole Kitchen

WHEN: Touring Elementary Schools March and April, 2023
Free public performances April 29 and 30 at 11am
At La Jolla Playhouse WOW Festival at The Rady Shell at Jacobs Park
Website: pop-tour-lajollaplayhouse-2023.com

BOOKING: For information about booking the POP Tour visit: pop-tour-lajollaplayhouse-2023.com

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:

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