

LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE ANNOUNCES NEW MUSICAL LEMPICKA TO LEAD OFF 2020/2021 SEASON, PRIOR TO A BROADWAY RUN

2019 Tony Award Winner Rachel Chavkin Helms Acclaimed Piece Centered on Renowned Painter Tamara de Lempicka

La Jolla, CA – La Jolla Playhouse is pleased to announce the first production of its 2020/2021 season: *Lempicka*, a new musical featuring book and lyrics by **Carson Kreitzer**, music by **Matt Gould**, and direction by 2019 Tony Award winner **Rachel Chavkin** (*Hadestown*; *Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812*). The show will make its west coast premiere at the Playhouse in May, prior to a Broadway run during the 2020/21 season.

This stunning new musical centers on an artist whose life intersected with major upheavals of the 20th century, and who created a new way for women to be in the world,” said **Christopher Ashley**, the Rich Family Artistic Director of La Jolla Playhouse. “What a thrill to launch our season with this lush, epic piece, helmed by the singularly talented Rachel Chavkin.”

The musical had its world premiere at Williamstown Theatre Festival in 2018 and became the must-see musical of the summer. *The New York Times* asked, “Is *Lempicka* the new *Evita*? A politically tumultuous tale of blond ambition with epic sweep has arrived,” and called the show, “Incandescent! An exciting new work which gives musical theater fans who’ve been wondering why they don’t write dominating parts for women any more reason to cheer. Matt Gould’s stirring, richly polyphonic music with lyrics by Carson Kreitzer layers voices against each other like lovers between the sheets and Rachel Chavkin is a miracle worker.”

Amidst the violence of the Russian Revolution, a young painter named Tamara de Lempicka and her aristocrat husband are forced to abandon their luxurious lifestyle and flee to the dubious safety of Paris. Relying on her raw talent and relentless ambition, Tamara claws her way from penniless refugee to in-demand portraitist, earning a place among Parisian high society. Her world is upended once again when she meets Rafaela, a free spirit from the city slums, who introduces Tamara to a new world of decadence and passion. Torn between her new muse and her husband, fighting to leave her mark on an ever-changing world, Tamara must discover the depths of her own strength to survive. Spanning decades of political and personal turmoil and told through a thrilling, pop-infused score, *Lempicka* boldly explores the contradictions of a world in crisis, a woman ahead of her era, and an artist whose time has finally come.

The world premiere of *Lempicka* was originally produced in July 2018 by the Williamstown Theatre Festival; Mandy Greenfield, Artistic Director.

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Rachel Chavkin received the 2019 Tony Award, Drama Desk Award and Outer Critics Circle Award for Best Director of a Musical for *Hadestown*. She is a director, writer and dramaturg, as well as the founding Artistic Director of Brooklyn-based ensemble the [TEAM](#), whose work has been seen all over London and the UK, including the National Theatre, Royal Court and multiple collaborations with the National Theatre of Scotland. Selected freelance work: Dave Malloy's *Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812* (Ars Nova, A.R.T., Broadway), *Lempicka* (Williamstown), Caryl Churchill's *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire* (New York Theatre Workshop), Marco Ramirez's *The Royale* (Old Globe, Lincoln Center), Bess Wohl's *Small Mouth Sounds* (Ars Nova, Off-Broadway, national tour), *Sarah Gancher's I'll Get You Back Again* (Round House) and multiple collaborations with Taylor Mac including *The Lily's Revenge, Act 2* (HERE). In addition to her awards for *Hadestown*, Chavkin is a recipient of a Tony Award nomination for Best Direction of a Musical, three Obie Awards, a Drama Desk Award, multiple Lortel Award nominations, two Doris Duke Impact Award nominations and the 2017 Smithsonian Award for Ingenuity along with Dave Malloy, with whom she is working on an upcoming adaptation of *Moby Dick* (A.R.T., December 2019). Her first film, *Remind Me*, was an official selection of the Venice and Beverly Hills Film Festivals. Proud NYTW Usual Suspect and Member SDC.

Matt Gould is a two-time Richard Rodgers Award winner (2012 and 2014) and Jonathan Larson Award winner. His musical *Witness Uganda* (a.k.a. *Invisible Thread*), written with Griffin Matthews, had its NY premiere at Second Stage Theater and its world premiere at the American Repertory Theater at Harvard. His original musical *Lempicka*, written with Carson Kreitzer, premiered at the Williamstown Theater Festival in 2018. Other works include *The Family Project* for LA's Center Theatre Group and *Twilight in Manhego* (directed by Tony Winner Billy Porter). Gould has written and arranged music for Playwrights Horizons and translated, adapted and directed *Romeo and Juliet in Pulaar* (Mauritania, West Africa). Gould has performed around the world including Uganda, Mauritania and Japan, and across the US. A graduate of Boston University's College of Fine Arts, he is a frequent speaker and guest lecturer at schools and universities. He is the co-director of [UgandaProject](#) but mostly just wants to be home with his husband and kid watching *Sesame Street* and walking the dogs. #Zaddy @FakeMattGould

Carson Kreitzer is a playwright, lyricist, librettist and a recent Guggenheim, MacDowell and McKnight Fellow. Current projects include *Capital Crime!*, a play with songs set in Gilded Age New York, and a series of plays about the climate crisis: *green*, *Timebomb* and a third play inspired by her time on a ship in the Arctic, exploring the Svalbard Archipelago as part of The Arctic Circle Artist and Scientist Residency Program. Her plays include *The Love Song of J. Robert Oppenheimer* (Rosenthal New Play Prize, Steinberg New Play Citation and Stavis Award), *The Slow Drag* (New York and London) and *Lasso of Truth* (NNPN Rolling World Premiere). She is a Core Writer with The Playwrights' Center, an alumna of New Dramatists and was the first Playwrights of New York (PoNY) Fellow at the Lark. Her collection *SELF DEFENSE and other plays* is available from No Passport Press.

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 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. LaJollaPlayhouse.org.