

LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE ANNOUNCES CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM FOR WORLD-PREMIERE SEASON OPENER: *THE GARDEN*

Playhouse to Offer 1000 Free Tickets for Educators and Healthcare Workers During Run, in Appreciation of Their Frontline Work During Covid-19

La Jolla, CA – La Jolla Playhouse announces the cast and creative team for its world-premiere production of *The Garden*, a Playhouse commission by Tony Award nominee **Charlayne Woodard** (Playhouse's *The Night Watcher*, *Pretty Fire*), co-directed by **Patricia McGregor** (Roundabout Theatre's *Ugly Lies the Bone*) and **Delicia Turner Sonnenberg** (Playhouse's POP Tour *#Super Shiny Sara*), running in the Playhouse's Sheila and Hughes Potiker Theatre **September 21 – October 17** (press opening: Sunday, September 26 at 7pm). *The Garden* is a co-production with Baltimore Center Stage.

The cast features **Stephanie Berry** (Off-Broadway's *Sugar in Our Wounds*) as "Claire Rose" and **Charlayne Woodard** as "Cassandra."

The creative team includes Tony Award winner **Rachel Hauck** (Playhouse's *An Iliad*, *Surf Report*), Scenic Designer; **Karen Perry**, Costume Designer; UC San Diego MFA graduate **Sherrice Mojgani**, Lighting Designer; **Luqman Brown**, Sound Designer; **Kirsten Childs** (Playhouse's *Fly*), Original Music; **Nikiya Mathis**, Wig Designer; **Erica Jensen**, Casting; **Shirley Fishman**, Dramaturg; and **Chandra Anthenill** (Playhouse's 2020 POP Tour *Emily Driver's Great Race Through Time and Space*), Stage Manager.

"After 18 months, we are overjoyed to welcome audiences back to the Playhouse for the launch of our 2021/2022 season, especially with this powerful new piece by beloved Playhouse artist Charlayne Woodard, co-directed by Patricia McGregor and Delicia Turner Sonnenberg – two visionary local artists," said **Christopher Ashley**, the Rich Family Artistic Director of La Jolla Playhouse.

This moving world premiere play explores the complex relationship between two "alpha" women: the elderly Claire Rose and her middle-aged daughter, Cassandra. After not speaking to each other for the past three years, Cassandra shows up unexpectedly at her mother's garden gate, attempting to reconcile old wounds. Both women give as good as they get, taking us on a rollercoaster ride unearthing conflicts and secrets of the past, and creating magic in the process.

In honor of the late Dr. Lawrence Friedman, La Jolla Playhouse Trustee, UC San Diego professor and renowned local physician, the Playhouse will be offering 1000 free tickets to educators and healthcare workers over the course of *The Garden's* run, in appreciation of their frontline work during COVID-19. Visit <https://lajollaplayhouse.org/show/the-garden/> for more information. Reservations will be available beginning September 8.

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Artist Biographies

Stephanie Berry (*Claire Rose*) is the 2021 recipient of The League of Professional Theatre Women's Lee Reynolds Award. During the pandemic she was seen in *Romeo N Juliet* at Pittsburgh Public Theatre, *For Which It Stands* with New York Theatre Workshop, *24 Hour Plays Viral Monologues*, *Having Our Say* at New Jersey City Theater. She was seen as *Frankenstein* at the Classic Stage Company, *for all the women who thought they were mad* at Soho Repertory, *Gloria: A Life* at Daryl Roth Theatre. She was nominated for a 2019 Lucille Lortel and Outer Critics Circle Award for Best Featured Actress for her role in *Sugar in Our Wounds* at Manhattan Theatre Club and a Helen Hayes Award for Best Lead Actress for her role in *Gem of the Ocean* at the Round House Theater. She appears in the movies *Before You Know It*, *O.G.*, *Delivery Man*, *Invasion*, *No Reservations* and *Finding Forrester*. TV credits include *Luke Cage*, *The Last OG*, *Bull*, *Blue Bloods*, all the *Law & Order* shows. She is the recipient of an OBIE Award for *The Shannequa Chronicles* and a TCG/Fox Foundation Resident Actor Fellowship as a "Distinguished Artist."

Charlayne Woodard (*Cassandra/Playwright*) is a two-time Obie Award winner and a Tony Award nominee. Her Broadway credits include *Ain't Misbehavin'* (original cast) and *Hair* (revival). She has appeared Off-Broadway in "*Daddy*", *Hamlet* (Gertrude), *WAR* (Mother), *The Substance of Fire* (Marge Hackett), *The Witch of Edmonton* (Witch), *In the Blood* (Hester), *Fabulation* (Ondine), *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* (Grusha), *Twelfth Night* (Maria), *Stunning, Sorrows and Rejoicings*. La Jolla Playhouse credits include *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Night Watcher*, *Pretty Fire*, *The Good Person of Setzuan*, *Shout Up a Morning*, among others. Film credits include: *Glass*, *Unbreakable*, *The Crucible*, *Eye for an Eye*, *Sunshine State*. TV: *Pose* (series regular); recurring roles: *In Treatment*, *Prodigal Son*, *Sneaky Pete*; *Law & Order*, *Special Victims Unit*; *ER*; guest star: *All Rise*, *The Leftovers*, *The Blacklist*. Playwright: *The Garden*, *Pretty Fire*, *Neat*, *In Real Life*, *The Night Watcher*, *Flight*. Nominations: Tony, Drama Desk, Lucille Lortel and Outer Critics Circle Awards. Adjunct Professor: USC, CAL ARTS.

Born in St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, **Patricia McGregor** (Co-Director) is a director and writer working in theater, film, and music. She has twice been profiled by The New York Times for her direction of world premieres. Productions include *Lights Out: Nat "King" Cole* (cowriter and director, Geffen Playhouse, People's Light); *Sisters In Law* (Wallis Annenberg) *What You Are*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Measure for Measure* (The Old Globe); *Skeleton Crew* (Geffen Playhouse); *Good Grief* (Center Theater Group); *Hamlet* (Public Theater); *The Parchman Hour* (Guthrie Theater); *Ugly Lies the Bone* (Roundabout Theatre); *brownsville song...* (Lincoln Center); *Indomitable: James Brown* (The Apollo); *Holding It Down* (Metropolitan Museum); *A Raisin in the Sun*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Spunk* (California Shakespeare Theater); *Adoration of the Old Woman* (INTAR); *Blood Dazzler* (Harlem Stage); *Four Electric Ghosts* (The Kitchen) and the world premiere of *Hurt Village* (Signature Theatre Company). She served as Associate Director of *Fela!* on Broadway. For many years she has directed The 24-Hour Plays on Broadway. She served as director for HBO emerging writer's showcase and tour consultant to Raphael Saadiq and J Cole. Her short film *Good Grief* will premiere this year. She co-founded Angela's Pulse with her sister, choreographer, and organizer Paloma McGregor, and sits on the advisory board of Adam Driver's Arts in the Armed Forces and the Parent Artist Advocacy League. McGregor attended the Yale School of Drama, where she was a Paul & Daisy Soros Fellow and Artistic Director of the Yale Cabaret.

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Delicia Turner Sonnenberg's (Co-Director) Playhouse credits include the 2018 POP Tour #*Super Shiny Sara*, WOW Festival's *The Car Plays SD* and *Counterweight*. Regional: *Skeleton Crew* (The Old Globe); *Roz and Ray*, *Sex with Strangers*, *My Mañana Comes*, *In the Wake*, *The Seafarer*, *The Good Body*, *Miss Witherspoon*, *Intimate Apparel*, *Proof* (San Diego REP); *The Piano Lesson*, *Fences* (Cygnet Theatre); *The Amish Project* (Mo`olelo Performing Arts Company). Additional Credits: Delicia 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. Other directing credits include: *Hamlet*, *Prelude to a Kiss* (New Village Arts Theatre); *Fit to be Tied* (Diversions Theatre); *Voyeurs de Venus*, *Bliss or Emily Post is Dead* (MOXIE Theatre). Delicia has had the pleasure of directing productions at The Old Globe and University of San Diego Shiley Graduate Theatre Program, University of San Diego undergraduates, Sonoma State University, University of Redlands, San Diego State University, University of California San Diego and Palomar College. Delicia 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. She has received NAACP Theatre awards and nomination for direction, a Women's International Center Living Legacy Award as well as many "Craig Noel" awards for Outstanding Direction of a Play and Outstanding Dramatic Production from the SD Theatre Critics Circle.

Designated the State Theater of Maryland in 1978, **Baltimore Center Stage** (Co-Producer) provides the highest quality theater and programming for all members of their communities, including youth and families, under the leadership of Artistic Director Stephanie Ybarra and Managing Director Michael Ross. Baltimore Center Stage ignites conversations and imaginations by producing an eclectic season of professional productions across two mainstages and an intimate 99-seat theater, through engaging community programs, and with inspiring education programs. Everything they do at Center Stage is led by their core values—chief among them being Access For All. Their mission is heavily rooted in providing active and open accessibility for everyone, regardless of any and all barriers, to their Mainstage performances, education initiatives, and community programming.

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 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: *The Garden*
World Premiere; La Jolla Playhouse Commission
By Charlayne Woodard
Co-Directed by Patricia McGregor and Delicia Turner Sonnenberg
Co-Production with Baltimore Center Stage

WHEN: **September 21 – October 17**
Press Opening: September 26 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 Design: Rachel Hauck Wig Design: Nikiya Mathis
Costume Design: Karen Perry Original Music: Kirsten Childs
Lighting Design: Sherrice Mojgani Dramaturg: Shirley Fishman
Sound Designer: Luqman Brown Casting: Erica Jensen
Stage Manager: Chandra Anthenill

Cast: Stephanie Berry *Claire Rose*
Charlayne Woodard *Cassandra*

BACKGROUND: This moving world premiere play explores the complex relationship between two “alpha” women: Claire Rose, an elderly woman and her middle-aged daughter, Cassandra. After not speaking to each other for the past three years, Cassandra shows up unexpectedly at her mother’s garden gate, attempting to reconcile old wounds. Both women give as good as they get, taking us on a rollercoaster ride unearthing conflicts and secrets of the past, and creating magic in the process.

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

SPONSORS: The Paula Marie Black Endowment for Women’s Voices
in the Art of Theatre

La Cuisine Custom Catering

COVID-19 SAFETY: Throughout the run of *The Garden*, La Jolla Playhouse will be requiring proof of full COVID-19 vaccination or a negative COVID-19 PCR test for patrons within 48 hours of their performance. The Playhouse will also be requiring that masks be worn by individuals in all indoor spaces, including the lobbies, restrooms and theatres. Additionally, all Playhouse staff, artists and volunteers will be fully vaccinated, and staff and volunteers will be wearing masks. The Playhouse will continue to evaluate its COVID safety plans in view of local health conditions and guidance from Federal, State and local authorities and will notify patrons of any changes. More at lajollaplayhouse.org/plan-your-visit/covid-safety/.

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