



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 5, 2021

ATC PRESENTS REAL-LIFE JOURNEYS, *THE HEATH*, STARRING, JOHN LARROQUETTE, AND THE PREMIERE OF *SOMEWHERE OVER THE BORDER*

Four-time Emmy Award winner John Larroquette, who also won a Tony Award for Best Actor in a Featured Role in a Musical, stars in Arizona Theatre Company's virtual audio presentation of Lauren Gunderson's heartwarming story based on her grandfather's life, *The Heath*, the second of three plays this spring inspired by their playwrights' personal life journeys.

The Heath will be presented in an audio format with imagery at 5 p.m. April 14 through 5 p.m. April 18 (Arizona Time) and can be viewed at www.arizonatheatre.org and on YouTube, Facebook and Vimeo. It will be followed by *Somewhere Over the Border*, inspired by Reina Quijada's real-life journey from El Salvador to the U.S. and L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. *Somewhere Over the Border*, a new musical that is both fable and family history, will be available at 8 p.m. May 4 through 8 p.m. May 8.

"It's an honor for ATC to be able to provide these two shows together: Two of the most exciting artists of our generation telling dangerously brave autobiographical pieces," said ATC Artistic Director Sean Daniels. "These two artists are the future of the American Theatre, if not its present, and we're excited to share their work with Arizona and the world."

The third play, ATC Playwright-in-Residence Elaine Romero's autobiographical play *Halsted*, will stream at 5 p.m. from March 10 through March 14 as part of the previously announced RomeroFest, a monthlong celebration of her work. *Halsted* examines how we love and find hope when don't have the words. For more information, visit www.arizonatheatre.org/romerofest.

In *The Heath*, which will be directed by Daniels, Gunderson turns her storytelling on herself as she wrestles with how you make peace with a beloved relative who seems unlike you in every way. This beautiful, funny meditation on her South Carolinian grandfather's life draws on everything from Shakespeare's *King Lear* to Bluegrass banjo in a soul-stirring story of legacy, family, Alzheimer's, World War II, redemption, love, madness and the science of memory.

"It's impossible not to be moved by Lauren Gunderson's elegant understated writing," Glenn Rifkin wrote in his review in *The Arts Fuse* of the world premiere under Daniels' direction in 2019 by the Merrimack Repertory Theatre.

"Lauren's work is fearless and equal part hilarious (with chunks of science, of course) and asks the question of our time: will we ever learn to look for similarities and not differences in those different from us," Daniels said. "Can we lead with love and curiosity before it's too late?"

Larroquette will perform as Gunderson's deceased grandfather, K.D. Martin and as King Lear, during the playwright's imagined encounter after his passing following a long, dark struggle with Alzheimer's. Gunderson will appear as herself.

Larroquette is best known to television audiences as Assistant District Attorney Dan Fielding, a role he played on NBC's *Night Court*. He also starred in the NBC comedy series *The John Larroquette Show* playing the night manager of a St. Louis bus station who is trying to change his life for the better. In its second season, it was nominated for four Emmys, including Best Actor for Larroquette. He won the Tony Award in 2011 for his role in *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*.

Gunderson, one of America's most-produced playwrights, continues her long and highly regarded collaborative relationship with Daniels, which includes the staging of ***Silent Sky*** with ATC. Sound Design will be by Danny Erdberg and Danielle Zandri is the Stage Manager.

Neil Shurley, in his review for BroadwayWorld.com, wrote that "I want to tell you about the deceiving simplicity of the confessional tone, about the way Gunderson weaves together ***King Lear*** and music lessons and even scientific asides about the empty space between dendrites that mysteriously house the memories of our own brains ... I want to tell you all these things. But more than anything, I just want to tell you to see ***The Heath*** and experience the simple magic of theatre."

Brian Quijada's ***Somewhere Over The Border***, directed by Reginald Douglas, embraces the factual and the fantastical in its depiction of one young girl's pursuit of the American dream. As Reina (Gabriela Moscoso) travels north to the Mexico border, she gathers friends, faces down dangers and holds tight to the memory of the little boy she left behind.

Set in the 1970s and propelled by Cumbia, Mexican Mariachi Boleros, American Rock and Hip Hop, ***Somewhere Over the Border*** is a testament to the determination born of love.

"Brian's work delves into the larger question of where do we come from, and how is family constructed," Daniels said. "In a musical over Zoom, which is no small feat, he is pushing all of us to identify what are the things that bring us together, and why can't we so readily see them? How do we choose a better life for our family and for each other?"

Joining Morosco in the cast are Diana Burbano (Antonia/Leona), Ricardo Gutierrez (Don Napoleon/Silvano), Tommy Rivera-Vega (Adan/Cruz), Jerreme Rodriguez (The Narrator) and Johanna Carlisle-Zepeda (Julia).

Vaibu Mohan is the Assistant Director, Glenn Bruner is the Production Stage Manager, Saori “Cel” Yokoo is the Stage Manager, Kristen Leahey is the Dramaturg and Nick Carroll is the Stage Management Intern.

Both *The Heath* and *Somewhere Over the Border* can be streamed for free, although donations are gratefully accepted.

For more information about Arizona Theatre Company, visit www.arizonatheatre.org.

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FACT SHEET

The Heath

Presentation Dates: 5 p.m. (Arizona Time) each day, April 14-18

Access: www.ArizonaTheatre.org, Facebook, YouTube, Vimeo

Creative Team

Playwright: Lauren Gunderson

Director: Sean Daniels

Sound Design: Danny Erdberg

Stage Manager: Danielle Zandri

Cast

John Larroquette (KD, King Lear)

Lauren Gunderson (herself)

Bios

Lauren Gunderson (Playwright) has been one of the most produced playwrights in America since 2015 topping the list twice including 2019/20. She is a two-time winner of the Steinberg/ATCA New Play Award for *I and You* and *The Book of Will*, the winner of the Lanford Wilson Award and the Otis Guernsey New Voices Award, a finalist for the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize and John Gassner Award for Playwriting, and a recipient of the Mellon Foundation’s Residency with Marin Theatre Company. She studied Southern Literature and Drama at Emory University, and Dramatic Writing at NYU’s Tisch School where she was a Reynolds Fellow in Social Entrepreneurship. Her newest play *The Catastrophist*, about her husband virologist Nathan Wolfe, premiered digitally in January 2021 and is now streaming worldwide. She co-authored the *Miss Bennet* plays with Margot Melcon, and her audioplay *The Half-Life of Marie Curie* is available on Audible.com. Her work is published at Playscripts (*I and You; Exit Pursued By A Bear; The Taming and Toil And Trouble*), Dramatists Play Service (*The Revolutionists; The Book of Will; Silent Sky; Bauer, Natural Shocks, The Wickhams and Miss Bennet*) and Samuel French (*Emilie*). Her picture book *Dr Wonderful: Blast Off to the Moon* is available from Two Lions/Amazon. She is currently developing musicals with Ari Afsar, Dave Stewart and Joss Stone, and Kait Kerrigan and Brian Lowdermilk. LaurenGunderson.com

Sean Daniels (Director) is honored to be in his second season at ATC, where he first fell in love with theatre. Sean has directed at Manhattan Theatre Club (*The Lion*, Drama Desk Award & Theatre World Award, nominated for Lucille Lortel and Outer Critics Circle), 59e59 (NYC, *I and You*, nominated for Outer Critics Circle), Lynn Redgrave (NYC), The Kennedy Center (Washington, D.C.), St. James (West End, London – *The Lion*, winner of Best New Musical), Arena Stage, A.C.T. (San Francisco), Milwaukee Rep, Old Globe, Geffen (L.A.), Actors Theatre of Louisville, Portland Center Stage, Geva Theatre, Playmakers Rep, Cleveland Play House, Alliance Theatre, California Shakespeare, Dad’s Garage Theatre Company, City Theatre, Swine Palace, Neo-Futurists, Aurora Theatre, Crowded Fire and the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. Sean has been named “one of the top fifteen up & coming artists in the U.S., whose work will be transforming America’s stages for decades to come” & “One Of 7 People Reshaping And Revitalizing The American Musical” by *American Theatre* magazine. His direction and shows have won “Best Play” and “Best Director” in London, Bay Area, Boston, Portland, Rochester and Atlanta. He was previously the Artistic Director of Merrimack Repertory Theatre, where he received national attention for his multiple artistic engagement programs that brought the community inside the organization. He’s also served as the Artist-At-Large for Geva Theatre Center and spent four years at the Tony Award®-winning Actors Theatre of Louisville as the theatre’s Associate Artistic Director (where he directed 17 productions including five Humana Festivals). Mr. Daniels is the former Associate Artistic Director/Resident Director of

the California Shakespeare Theater and before that spent a decade as the Artistic Director and Co-Founder of Dad's Garage Theater Company in Atlanta. He has developed new work with the Eugene O'Neill Theatre Center, Ars Nova, PlayPenn, Lark, PlayLabs, New York Stage and Film, Asolo Rep, Goodspeed Opera, Weston Playhouse, Bay Area Playwrights, Magic Theatre and was the first American director asked to attend the Baltic American Playwrights Conference in Hiiumaa, Estonia. As a playwright, his work has been produced at Actors Theatre of Louisville, City Theatre, Merrimack Repertory Theatre and Dad's Garage. He was the first ever playwright authorized by the Jack Kerouac Estate to adapt his work for the stage. The Commercial Off-Broadway run of his sober comedy *The White Chip* was produced by five-time Tony Award* nominee Tom Kirdahy. He'd love to hear from you. sdaniels@arizonatheatre.org twitter: @seandaniels

John Larroquette (KD, King Lear): A four-time Emmy winner for "Best Supporting actor in a Comedy Series," Larroquette is best known to television audiences as 'Assistant District Attorney Dan Fielding,' a role he played on NBC's "Night Court." He also starred in the NBC comedy series "The John Larroquette Show," in which he played the night manager of a St. Louis bus station who is trying to change his life for the better. In its second season, it was nominated for four Emmys, including "Best Actor" for Larroquette. John's other television credits include his guest appearance in the drama, "The Practice" for which he received an Emmy for "Best Guest Star on a Drama Series." In 2007, he joined the cast of Boston Legal playing Carl Sack, a serious, ethical lawyer (the polar opposite of his more famous lawyer character, Dan Fielding). John has made guest appearances on television shows such as "Almost Human", "Sober Companion" (pilot), "White Collar", "Chuck", and "House". Additionally, Larroquette starred opposite Noah Wyle and Rebecca Romijn in TNT's "The Librarians", based on the hit original television movie series. John can most recently be seen in a leading role opposite Christine Baranski in the fourth season of "The Good Fight" for CBS All Access.

Larroquette also executive produced and starred in the NBC movie-of-the-week "One Special Victory." The story focused on an insensitive real estate salesman whose life develops meaning when he is committed to coach a group of developmentally disabled adults. Larroquette also appeared in Robert Halmi's "Tenth Kingdom", a 10-hour mini series for CBS co-starring Dianne Wiest and Camryn Manheim. On the big screen, Larroquette starred in Richie Rich opposite Macauley Culkin, Blake Edwards' Blind Date opposite Bruce Willis and Kim Basinger, Madho11se opposite Kirstie Alley, as well costarring roles in S11mmer Rental, Star Trek III: The Search for Spock appearing as Klingon officer Maltz, Stripes, Altered States and Twilight Zone: The Movie.

In 1989, fans saw a different side of Larroquette's abilities when he stepped on-stage in "Happy Jack." He played a reflecting working-class husband in this two-character drama opposite his wife, actress Elizabeth Larroquette. Written by John Godber, directed by Ron Link and produced by Catalina and Portfilm Productions, "Happy Jack" received several Dramalogue nominations. Larroquette made his musical stage debut in the Los Angeles production of How the Grinch Stole Christmas! as Old Max in 2009. He made his Broadway debut in the 2011 revival of How To Succeed In Business Without Really Trying as J. B. Biggley alongside Daniel Radcliffe. He won the Tony Award for Best Featured Actor in a Musical and the Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Featured Actor in a Musical for his performance in the show. He also appeared on Broadway in a revival of Gore Vidal's The Best Man; the all-star cast also included James Earl Jones, Angela Lansbury, Candice Bergen, Mark Blum, Eric McCormack and Jefferson Mays.

Somewhere Over the Border

Presentation Dates: 8 p.m. (Arizona Time) each day, May 4-8

Access: www.ArizonaTheatre.org., Facebook, YouTube, Vimeo

Creative Team

Playwright: Brian Quijada

Director: Reginald Douglas

Assistant Director: Vaibu Mohan

Dramaturg: Kristin Leahey

Stage Manager: Glenn Bruner

Stage Management Intern: Nick Carroll

Cast

Gabriela Moscoso (Reina)

Diana Burbano (Antonio/Leona)

Ricardo Gutierrez (Don Napoleon/Silvano)

Tommy Rivera-Vega (Adan/Cruz)

Jerreme Rodriguez (The Narrator)

Johanna Carlisle-Zepeda (Julia)

Bios

Brian Quijada (Playwright/Composer; he/him/his) is an actor, playwright, and composer who's original work has been developed and produced all across the country. His hip hop solo show *Where Did We Sit on the Bus?* has been produced at Victory Gardens, Teatro Vista (Jeff Award), Ensemble Studio Theatre (Drama Desk Nomination), Boise Contemporary, 1st Stage, City Theatre Pittsburgh, Actors Theatre of Louisville, and Geva Theatre. His plays have been developed at The Millennium Stage at The Kennedy Center, Pittsburgh CLO's Spark Festival, Victory Gardens' Ignition Festival, New Stage and Film's Powerhouse Festival, and The Eugene O'Neill Theater Center's National Musical Theatre Conference. Commissioning institutions include Seattle Repertory Theater, A.R.T., and The Kennedy Center. He is a proud member of The Ensemble Studio Theatre.

Reginald Douglas (Director; he/him/his) is a director, producer, and advocate dedicated to creating new work and supporting new voices. He has worked at theaters across the country, including directing work at Eugene O'Neill Center, TheaterWorks Hartford, CATF, Everyman Theatre, Weston Playhouse, Pittsburgh CLO, Theatre Squared, Playwrights Center, Profile Theatre, Kennedy Center, The Lark, New York Theatre Workshop, and City Theatre Company in Pittsburgh, where he served as the Artistic Producer from 2015-2020. Reginald currently works as the Associate Artistic Director at Studio Theatre in Washington, DC and serves on the Board of Directors of the National New Play Network.

www.reginalddouglas.com

Gabriela Moscoso (Reina; she/her/hers) First-generation Ecuadorian, Gabriela was born and raised in Queens, NYC. Holding a BM in Opera Performance (Manhattan School of Music), theater credits include: *Zoongoro Bailongo* (NYC Children's Theater), *Marquee* (RCCL), *Laundry & Bourbon* (CCNY), *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Long Island Opera). Additional credits include performances at Carnegie Hall, the NY Philharmonic, Feinstein's/54 Below, and Birdland Theater.

Diana Burbano (Antonia/Leona; she/her/hers), a Colombian immigrant, is a playwright, an Equity actor, and a teaching artist at South Coast Repertory and Breath of Fire Latina Theatre Ensemble. Diana's play *Ghosts of Bogotá* was commissioned and debuted at Alter Theater in the Bay Area in Feb 2020. Diana played Amalia in Jose Cruz Gonzales' *American Mariachi* at South Coast Repertory and Arizona Theatre Company, and Marisela in *La Ruta* at Artists Repertory. You can also see her as Viv the Punk in the cult musical *Isle of Lesbos*.

Ricardo Gutierrez (Don Napoleon/Silvano; he/him/his) Ricardo is delighted to be working with the Arizona Theatre Company for the first time. Recent Chicago credits include *Mother of the Maid* at Northlight, *Ah, Wilderness* and *Destiny of Desire* at the Goodman. Regional credits include The Dallas Theatre Center, South Coast Repertory, Actors Theatre in Louisville and The Denver Center Theatre. Film and television credits include *Stranger Than Fiction*, *Stand and Deliver*, *Boss*, and *Chicago PD*. Ricardo is the former Executive Artistic Director of Teatro Vista where he recently directed *Hope*, and the world premieres of *The Madres*, and *The Wolf at the End of the Block*.

Tommy Rivera-Vega (Adan/Cruz; he/him/his) is a Teatro Vista Ensemble Member. Credits include *Music Man*, *Lottery Day*, *Support Group for Men* (Goodman Theatre); *SWEAT* (Huntington Theatre); *La Havana Madrid*, *Parachute Men*, *Between You Me and the Lampshade*, *A View From the Bridge*, *Hope* (Teatro Vista); *Frederick* (Chicago Children's Theatre); *West Side Story* (Drury Lane Theatre); *In the Heights* (Paramount Theatre & Skylight Music Theatre); *Three Sisters* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company), as well as work with BoHo Theatre, Adventure Stage, and Theo Ubique. Puerto Rico credits include *Spring Awakening* and *Footloose* (Black Box Theatre). Tommy is represented by Paonessa Talent Agency.

Jerreme Rodriguez (The Narrator; he/him/his) was last seen in Austin, TX in *The Watchmakers Song* with Ventana Ballet. At The Pittsburgh CLO Cabaret he originated the role of Kenny in the World Premier of *The Double-Threat Trio* and played Paco in *Miss. Abigail's Guide...* opposite Paige Davis. Other Pittsburgh credits include: Luke in *Dance Nation* with Barebones Productions; *Looking for Violeta* with Quantum Theater, Jimmy Ray in *Bright Star* with Front Porch Theatricals, Oscar in *Sweat* at The Pittsburgh Public Theater, Lucian in *Wig Out!* with The Pittsburgh Rep., and several shows with Pittsburgh Musical Theater. Other regional credits: *Hello, Dolly!* at Casa Manana in Ft. Worth, TX. He's performed *Chicago*, *A Little Night Music*, and *Lucky Stiff* for Austin Playhouse, *Aida* with Austin Lyric Opera, and as the MC in *Cabaret* at Mary Moody Northen Theater. He originated the roles of

Mikael/Raina in *I Like To Be Here* for Theater 167 in New York, and was Greg in the national tour of *A Chorus Line*. He's a librettist in the BMI Musical Theater Workshop, and proud alumni of Interlochen Arts Academy and Point Park University.

Johanna Carlisle-Zepeda (Julia; she/her/hers) Johanna Carlisle-Zepeda is a proud AZ native bicoastal performer living in Phoenix and Boston. She has spent the last few years writing, directing and performing for theatergoers in her self-produced show *Musical Schmoozicals*. She is also known for her involvement and dedication to the development of New Works by not only acting for many seasons but directing new works. She originated the role of Felicitas Valdovinos in the World Premiere of *Americano! The Musical* in Jan 2020. Regional Theatre include: Inez in *The View Upstairs*, Beatriz in *Miss You Like Hell*, Abuela Claudia in *In the Heights*, Mayor, Ma and Nun in *The Toxic Avenger*, Yente in *Fiddler on the Roof*. Madame Thernardier in *Les Miserables*, Truvy in *Steel Magnolias*, Effy in *Spitfire Grill*, directed by the incomparable Brad Carroll and Widow Corney, in *Oliver!*, conducted by the outstanding Tito Munoz with The Phoenix Symphony.

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About Arizona Theatre Company:

Under new leadership and now celebrating its 54th Season, Arizona Theatre Company is truly "The State Theatre," with the largest subscriber base of any performing arts organization in Arizona. More than 130,000 people each year attend performances at the historic Temple of Music and Art in Tucson and the elegant Herberger Theater Center in downtown Phoenix.

Each season of high-quality productions reflects the rich variety of world theatre – from classic to contemporary plays, from musicals to new works – and audiences enjoy the rich emotional experience and joy that can only be captured through live theatre. ATC is the preeminent professional theatre in the state of Arizona. Under the direction of Artistic Director Sean Daniels and Managing Director Geri Wright, ATC operates in two cities – unlike any other League of Resident Theaters (LORT) company in the country.

ATC shares the passion of the theatre through a wide array of outreach programs, educational opportunities, access initiatives and community events. With more than 800 Education & Engagement activities through schools and summer programs, ATC focuses on teaching Arizona's youth about the creative power of dramatic literature and how it can enrich their own lives in multiple ways.

ATC reaches far beyond the metropolitan areas of Tucson and Phoenix, enriching the theatre learning experience nationally for current and future audiences.