

LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE ANNOUNCES MAJOR ENDOWMENT GIFT DESIGNATING CHRISTOPHER ASHLEY AS THE RICH FAMILY ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE

La Jolla, CA – La Jolla Playhouse is pleased to announce that longtime Playhouse supporters **Bob and Mindy Rich** have made a major gift to the theatre to endow the Artistic Director Chair. This generous donation will help sustain the Playhouse's mission and designate Christopher Ashley, the theatre's artistic leader and 2017 Tony Award winner, as **The Rich Family Artistic Director of La Jolla Playhouse**.

"It's a distinct pleasure to advance the work of La Jolla Playhouse, while recognizing the tremendous contributions that Chris has made to regional and national theater," said **Mindy Rich**. "Chris has remarkable creative instincts and is unique in championing a broad range of theatrical works—from searing dramas to full-bodied comedies. As a result, audiences are exposed to an array of voices and viewpoints that are vastly distinct, uniformly compelling and thoroughly entertaining."

"I am deeply touched and honored by this extraordinary gift made to endow the Artistic Director Chair at the Playhouse," said **Ashley**. "Bob and Mindy have been tremendous supporters of new work at the Playhouse for many years, and this latest gift is a testament to their passion for the Playhouse and our commitment to developing new work for our stages and beyond."

Christopher Ashley has served as La Jolla Playhouse's Artistic Director since 2007. During his tenure, he has overseen the production of 45 world premieres, 15 Broadway transfers and three WOW Festivals. He directed the Playhouse's productions of *The Squirrels*, *Hollywood*, *The Darrell Hammond Project*, *His Girl Friday*, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, *A Dram of Drummhicit*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Restoration* and the musicals *Diana*, *Escape to Margaritaville*, *Disney's Freaky Friday*, *Chasing the Song*, *Xanadu*, *Memphis*, which won four 2010 Tony Awards including Best Musical, and the Olivier Award-winning *Come From Away*, for which he won the 2017 Tony Award for Best Director of a Musical. He has also spearheaded the Playhouse's Without Walls (WOW) series of immersive and site-based theatre, the DNA New Work Series and the Resident Theatre program. Ashley is the recipient of the Princess Grace Award, the Drama League Director Fellowship, and an NEA/TCG Director Fellowship, and serves on the Executive Committee of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society.

As Chair and Vice Chair of Rich Products, **Bob and Mindy Rich** encourage associates worldwide to dedicate their time and talent to the communities and causes that have personal meaning. Personally, and through Rich Family Foundation, Bob and Mindy continue to support everything from emerging neighborhood collaboratives dedicated to social impact, to internationally renowned institutions such as Cleveland Clinic, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame + Museum, and the Culinary Institute of America.

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. Currently led by 2017 Tony Award-winning Artistic Director Christopher Ashley and Managing Director Debby Buchholz, the Playhouse was founded in 1947 by Gregory Peck, Dorothy McGuire and Mel Ferrer. Playhouse artists and audiences have taken part in the development of new plays and musicals, including mounting 101 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, including the 1993 Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre. For more information, visit LaJollaPlayhouse.org.

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