

MISSION STATEMENT:

La Jolla Playhouse advances theatre as an art form and as a vital social, moral and political platform by providing unfettered creative opportunities for the leading artists of today and tomorrow. With our youthful spirit and eclectic, artist-driven approach, we will continue to cultivate a local and national following with an insatiable appetite for audacious and diverse work. In the future, San Diego's La Jolla Playhouse will be considered singularly indispensable to the worldwide theatre landscape, as we become a permanent safe harbor for the unsafe and surprising. The day will come when it will be essential to enter the La Jolla Playhouse village in order to get a glimpse of what is about to happen in American theatre.



**A MESSAGE FROM THE
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR**

Last February, we started a new initiative at La Jolla Playhouse: the DNA New Work Series. As our long-time patrons and supporters know, developing new plays and musicals is a core value of the Playhouse. The DNA Series was designed as a way to bring our audiences into the process of workshops and readings – to connect them with exciting new works at an earlier stage in their evolution.

One of the plays in that inaugural DNA Series was *The Who & The What* by Ayad Akhtar. The script was as new as they come, a very first draft that Ayad had never even heard read aloud in his living room, let alone in front of an audience. But during that first reading, it was evident that this play spoke urgently to a wide range of people. The discussion with the audience that night was riveting: sometimes charged, often warm, never less than fully engaged and passionate. I had already fallen in love with what Ayad's play was asking; the conversation it engendered sealed the deal. Soon after, I offered Ayad and Kimberly Senior, his director, the final production slot in our 2013/14 season.

At its best, theatre opens up a dialogue that continues long after the curtain has come down. With humor, open-heartedness and fierce intelligence, Ayad's play grapples with a number of ideas that continue to resonate with me each time I reconnect with it. Specifically, the ways in which our culture helps construct our opinions and experiences of love between romantic partners, between parents and children, between siblings, between people and their faith. All of this culminating in ways in which we're challenged when we're bold enough to question our own ideas of faith and love.

Since that first reading in the DNA Series, through development here in La Jolla and elsewhere, Ayad and Kimberly have only deepened the questions this play asks of us all. The result is a funny, provocative and moving show. Thank you for joining us, and enjoy *The Who & The What*.

**CHRISTOPHER
ASHLEY**
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR