

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Native Voices at the Autry Presents the 17th Annual
Festival of New Plays**

Featuring Free Public Readings by Three Native American Playwrights

May 27 and 28, 2015

Autry National Center of the American West, Los Angeles

May 30 and 31, 2015

La Jolla Playhouse, La Jolla

Los Angeles, CA (April 30, 2015)— Native Voices at the Autry, America's leading Native American theatre company, presents its **17th Annual Festival of New Plays** at the Autry National Center of the American West and La Jolla Playhouse. The festival features staged readings of new and in-progress plays by Native writers followed by audience talkbacks in which each viewer becomes an important part of the collaborative process.

"This is the most exciting event in our development season," said **Jean Bruce Scott**, Native Voices Producing Executive Director. "The playwrights workshop their scripts with a dedicated cast while in residence at the Autry. They hear their plays read and discussed for three different audiences: the first day for the full company (actors, directors, producers, dramaturges and designers), a week later for a public audience at the Autry, and two days after that for a public audience at the Tony Award-winning La Jolla Playhouse. The separate readings, meetings with designers, and daily workshops help the playwright to revise or rewrite as needed based on what they learn. Public readings are an invaluable tool, allowing the playwright to evaluate how the language, structure, story and themes are being heard. This is why the audience is so vital to the playwright's process and is such an important part of what we do at Native Voices."

A weeklong playwrights retreat that precedes Native Voices' highly respected festival brings together beginning, emerging, and established Native American playwrights to shape their plays with nationally recognized directors, dramaturges, and an acting company of exceptional Native American actors. Many works developed during this project have gone on to enjoy successful runs on Native Voices at the Autry's main stage and elsewhere, including *Off the Rails* (2015), *The Bird House* (2012), and *The Frybread Queen* (2011).

The Festival of New Plays is free but reservations are recommended. For reservations and additional information, visit TheAutry.org/NativeVoices.

About the Featured Readings and Authors

***Timestop* by Joseph Valdez (Navajo*)**

An artist attempts to reconcile a tragic event in order to reclaim his identity.

Valdez received the Presidential and National Hispanic Scholarships to study at the University of Southern California where he received his BA in Theatre (Magna Cum Laude). He has written three plays: *Little Big Joe the Bug Squasher*, *Swimming to China in My Birthday Suit*, and *Timestop*. *Little Big Joe* and *Swimming to China* both premiered at the Powerhouse Theatre as part of the first two What's the Story? Festivals. *Timestop* was workshopped by Theatricum Botanicum's Seedlings playwriting development series. Valdez is also an accomplished actor, most recently starring as Alessandro in the 2015 *Ramona*, California's Official Outdoor Play.

Readings:

Wednesday, May 27, 4:00 p.m. at the Autry in Los Angeles

Saturday, May 30, 2:30 p.m. at the La Jolla Playhouse in La Jolla

***They Don't Talk Back* by Frank Henry Kaash Katasse (Tlingit-Eagle/Tsaagweidí*)**

A young teen discovers the meaning of family when he is sent to live and work with his Tlingit grandparents in a remote Alaskan village.

Katasse is an actor, director, producer, and playwright. He majored in Theatre at the University of Hawaii, Mānoa, where he performed with the University's theatre program and improv group, as well as Kumu Kahua Theatre. Katasse is involved with Juneau's Perseverance Theatre, Theatre in the Rough, and Morally Improvrished. He also has acted in short films and contributed as a script developer for other independent playwrights. Katasse currently serves as the Vice President of Juneau Douglas Little Theatre.

Readings:

Wednesday, May 27, 7:30 p.m. at the Autry in Los Angeles

Saturday, May 30, 7:00 p.m. at La Jolla Playhouse in La Jolla

***So Damn Proud* by Justin Neal (Squamish*)**

A former dance prodigy fights to shut out her past and her troubled brother as the biracial siblings carve out their identities in a divided world.

Neal received his undergraduate degree at Western Washington University's Fairhaven College with an interdisciplinary degree in Cultural Diversity and the Dramatic Arts. He is currently pursuing a joint master's degree in Creative Writing and Theatre at the University of British Columbia. The writer, actor,

and collaborator on theatrical projects has worked with Quiet, International WOW, The Anthropologists, Rady & Bloom, and Shotgun Players, among others. He has served as executive producer and actor for the web series *Green-ish* and co-founded The Oakland Playhouse (now San Francisco-based Big City Improv). Neal has produced Brave New Play Rites for two years, a collaborative festival between UBC playwrights and actors, directors, and technical artists throughout Vancouver. His original short play *What's New* premiered at the 2014 festival.

Readings:

Thursday May 28, 7:30 p.m. at the Autry in Los Angeles

Sunday, May 30, 3:00 p.m. at the La Jolla Playhouse in La Jolla

*Refers to tribal affiliation.

Sponsors

Native Voices at the Autry is sponsored by San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, Department of Cultural Affairs (City of Los Angeles), Edison International, Los Angeles County Arts Commission, National Endowment for the Arts, The Nissan Foundation, Seven Post Private Investment Office, Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians, Sony Pictures, The Walt Disney Company, and Wells Fargo.

About Native Voices at the Autry

Native Voices at the Autry is the only Equity theatre company devoted exclusively to developing and producing new works for the stage by Native American, Alaska Native, and First Nations playwrights. Founded in 1994 by Producing Artistic Director Randy Reinholz (Choctaw*) and Producing Executive Director Jean Bruce Scott, Native Voices became the resident theatre company at the Autry National Center of the American West in 1999. The 2014–2015 season celebrates the company's 15th year at the Autry and its 20th anniversary advancing Native theatre. The company provides a supportive, collaborative setting for Native theatre artists from across North America. This season the company established the Native Voices Artists Ensemble to support and engage the extraordinary talents of its Native actors, writers, musicians, and directors. The Ensemble is devoted to developing new work in a collaborative process as well as supporting Native Voices' ongoing focus on the work of individual playwrights. Native Voices at the Autry is a member of Actors' Equity Association, LA Stage Alliance, and the Dramatists Guild, and is a Constituent Theatre of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for the American theatre. Visit TheAutry.org/NativeVoices for more information.

About the Autry National Center of the American West

The Autry is a museum dedicated to exploring and sharing the stories, experiences, and perceptions of the diverse peoples of the American West, connecting the past to the present to inspire our shared future. The museum presents a wide range of exhibitions and public programs—including lectures, film, theatre, festivals, family events, and music—and performs scholarship, research, and educational outreach. The Autry's collection of more than 500,000 pieces of art and artifacts includes the Southwest

Museum of the American Indian Collection, one of the largest and most significant of Native American materials in the United States.

Hours

Museum and Autry Store:

Tuesday–Friday, 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

Saturday and Sunday, 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

Crossroads West Cafe:

Tuesday–Friday, 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

Saturday and Sunday, 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

Added Festival Hours

Wednesday and Thursday, May 27–28, 6:30–7:30 p.m.

The museum, store, and cafe are closed on Mondays. Visit TheAutry.org for more information.

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WHO: Native Voices at the Autry, America’s leading Native American theatre company

WHAT: Festival of New Plays

WHEN: May 27 and 28 at the Autry. May 30 and 31 at La Jolla Playhouse.

READINGS:

AT THE AUTRY

Timestop

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They Don’t Talk Back

Wednesday, May 27, 7:30 p.m.

So Damn Proud

Thursday, May 28, 7:30 p.m.

AT LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE

Timestop

Saturday, May 30, 2:30 p.m.

They Don’t Talk Back

Saturday, May 30, 7:00 p.m.

So Damn Proud

Sunday, May 31, 3:00 p.m.

WHERE:

Wells Fargo Theater

Autry National Center of the American West
4700 Western Heritage Way
Los Angeles, CA 90027-1462

La Jolla Playhouse

2910 La Jolla Village Drive
La Jolla, CA 92037

TICKET PRICES:

Free / Reservations Recommended

INFORMATION:

TheAutry.org/NativeVoices

IMAGES ARE AVAILABLE ON REQUEST