



**PRESS RELEASE
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**AURORA THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS
THE BAY AREA PREMIERE OF
*THE LIFESPAN OF A FACT***

Facts battle with truth in this hilarious misadventure about journalistic integrity

BERKELEY, CA (June 5, 2024) Aurora Theatre Company ends its 32nd season with the Bay Area Premiere of **THE LIFESPAN OF A FACT** by **Jeremy Kareken & David Murrell** and **Gordon Farrell**, based on the book by John D’Agata and Jim Fingal. Aurora alums **Elijah Alexander** (*The Real Thing*) and **Carrie Paff** (*The Real Thing, This Is How It Goes, A Delicate Balance*) are joined on stage by **Hernán Angulo** in this comedic Broadway hit that will have audiences reexamining their assumptions about fact and fiction. **Jessica Holt** directs.

THE LIFESPAN OF A FACT will be presented in person on Aurora’s mainstage from **June 21-July 21 (Opening Night: Wednesday, June 26)**.

Aurora will also offer a week of streaming **THE LIFESPAN OF A FACT** performances for audiences to enjoy in their homes. Streaming performances will run concurrently with in-person performances from **July 16-21**.

Artistic Director Josh Costello said: “I’m so pleased to welcome Elijah Alexander and Carrie Paff back to Aurora. Our audiences loved them in 2017’s *The Real Thing*, and I know that they, along with Hernán Angulo, are the perfect cast to bring this comedy to life on our mainstage.

“Theatre is all about telling stories that reveal deeper truths; about ourselves, our history, our world. Whether those stories are factually accurate has little bearing on the truth they may reveal. Such is the dilemma that celebrated essayist John D’Agata and entry-level fact-checker Jim Fingal fell into around

‘What Happens There,’ D’Agata’s essay about a teen suicide in Las Vegas. John’s essay beautifully explored truths about his community and our society, but Jim quickly discovered that John changed the facts to better suit the deeper story he wanted to tell.

“Fortunately for us, the stage adaptation compresses the timeline – playing fast and loose with the facts – to make for a compelling night of theatre. I’m so pleased to share it with our audience.”

SYNOPSIS: An intern at a top magazine is given the assignment of a lifetime – fact-checking a masterpiece by a legendary essayist. What the no-nonsense editor means as a simple task becomes a hilarious misadventure when it becomes clear that most of the facts in the essay are embellished, adjusted, or just made up. The essay is brilliant, but has the essayist undermined his own work or revealed a deeper truth by playing fast and loose to make his point? Facts battle with truth when the intern bucks his instructions and confronts the essayist in this Broadway hit.

“Spry humor, rippling tension and provocative reflections... ingenious!”

– *Hollywood Reporter*

Post-show discussions for **THE LIFESPAN OF A FACT** will be led by Aurora staff or members of the Creative Team, and hosted after the show on the following days: **Friday, June 28; Tuesday, July 2; Friday, July 5; Wednesday, July 10; Thursday, July 18.**

THE LIFESPAN OF A FACT Cast and Creative Team

Gordon Farrell (Playwright) Trained as a playwright at the Yale School of Drama, Gordon received an MFA in 1986 and went from there to work with major Hollywood studios, initially as a story analyst for Warner Brothers and Columbia Pictures, and eventually as a screenwriter. He has written for hire and sold screenplays to Universal Pictures, Warner Brothers, MGM, and ITC. He has worked with Robert Simonds (producer of *The Wedding Singer*, *Molly's Game*, *Mile 22*); Neal Moritz (producer of *XXX*, *I Know What You Did Last Summer*, *Fast & Furious*) and Bruce Berman (producer of *The Matrix*, *Three Kings*, *Mad Max: Fury Road*). Working in independent film, Gordon has written for and sold projects to NYC indie producer Norman Twain (producer of *Lean on Me*, *Boycott*, *My Dog Tulip*). Gordon's first independent screenplay, *Girls Who Smoke*, premiered in 2011. It went on to be an official selection at over a dozen film festivals, ultimately winning the Audience Choice Award in Seattle at the Post Alley Film Festival. As a playwright, from 2009 to 2013, Gordon worked with dozens of women on New York's Lower East Side who wanted to tell their personal stories on stage. The series of monologue plays that grew out of it was called *In The Red Room/Every Woman Dances For Someone*. In May 2019 the fully dramatized version, *Girls Who Walked On Glass*, played to SRO houses and rave reviews in

Buffalo and is scheduled to transfer to New York City in 2020. His other plays have been produced in San Francisco, at the Alleyway Theatre, at the Yale School of Drama, and at Primary Stages in New York. He is the author of "The Power of the Playwright's Vision," published by Heinemann Press in 2001. It has been translated internationally and become a standard playwriting text at colleges and universities in North America, Europe, and Asia.

Jeremy Kareken (Playwright) is a playwright living in New York and Baltimore. His short plays *Hot Rod*, *Big Train*, and *80 Cards* have been performed around the country and internationally. He served as a speechwriter and policy analyst for two presidential campaigns. His awards include the Sewanee Conference's Dakin Fellowship for *Farblondjet*, and Guthrie/Playwrights Center's Two-Headed Challenge for *The Sweet Sweet Motherhood*. The Hamptons Film Festival Screenwriters Conference selected Kareken and David Murrell for their horror-comedy script about haunted breast implants—*THESE! Conquered the Earth!* In 2018, PlayPenn shortlisted Jeremy's new political satire about an illiterate king, *The Red Wool*. Born and raised in Rochester, New York, and a graduate of the University of Chicago, he has taught at NYU, NYIT, the Actors Studio Drama School, and currently teaches at the Acting Studio—New York. A lifetime member of The Actors Studio, Jeremy occasionally acts and for 18 years served as the researcher for Bravo TV's *Inside the Actors Studio*.

David Murrell (Playwright) was born and raised in New York City. He graduated from Stuyvesant High School and the University of Chicago, currently lives in Queens, and has written a sea chest's worth of TV and film treatments and spec scripts. Access Theater (NYC) and the Cleveland Public Theatre each produced his play *Ductwork* and the Hamptons Film Festival Screenwriters Conference selected his and Jeremy Kareken's feature screenplay about haunted breast implants, *THESE! Conquered the Earth!* In 2019, the Outer Critics Circle co-awarded David its John Gassner Playwriting Award for *The Lifespan Of A Fact*.

Jessica Holt (Director) makes her Aurora directing debut. Recent projects include *Sense & Sensibility* (The Cape Playhouse), *The Great Leap* (Oklahoma City Repertory Theater), *Fun Home* (River & Rail Theatre), *Ironbound*, *The Code* by The Kilbanes (American Conservatory Theatre), *Uncovering Downtown* by Jessica Holt & Mona Mansour (En Garde Arts), *The Thanksgiving Play*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Fun Home*, *Venus in Fur* (Virginia Stage Company), *The Resting Place*, *Bright Half Life*, *The Lily's Revenge* (Magic Theatre), *Speech and Debate* (Barrington Stage Company), *Rich Girl* (Florida Studio Theatre), *The Daughters* (San Francisco Playhouse), and *Ugly Lies the Bone* (Alliance Theater). She has developed and directed new work at Cape Cod Theatre Project, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Santa Cruz Shakespeare, Berkeley Rep, Rivendell Theatre, Bay Area Playwrights Festival, and Sewanee Writers Conference, among others. Holt holds an MFA in Directing from the Yale School of Drama.

Elijah Alexander returns to Aurora where he was last seen in 2017's *The Real Thing*. Currently he is filming the fifth season of *The Chosen* where he plays Atticus Aemilius. He recently wrapped a rep run at The Utah Shakespeare Festival as Timon in *Timon of Athens* and Tullus Aufidius in *Coriolanus*. He continues to tour with his work *The Mitzvah Project*, a social justice-themed educational program/one-man performance piece. Alexander has been seen on Broadway in Mary Zimmerman's Tony Award-winning *Metamorphoses*, and at the Royal Shakespeare Company in John Barton's *Tantalus*, directed by Sir Peter Hall. Regional credits include Public Theater, Alley Theatre, Guthrie Theater, Berkeley Rep, New York Theatre Workshop, ACT Seattle, Yale Rep, five seasons at The Oregon Shakespeare Festival, five seasons at the Utah Shakespeare Festival, and three seasons at the California Shakespeare Theater. TV and film credits include *Mr. & Mrs. Smith* and *Touch* on FOX, *Amazing Love* (Christiano Films), *Awake* (NBC), *Summerland* (WB), *JAG* (CBS), *Emily's Reasons Why Not* (ABC), and *So Notorious* (VH1). Alexander is a Fox Fellowship Awardee and The Yale School of Drama graduate.

Hernán Angulo makes his Aurora debut. Regional credits include productions at Arena Stage, Berkeley Rep, American Conservatory Theater, and Perseverance Theatre. Angulo holds a BA in Theater & Performance Studies from UC Berkeley and is a graduate of A.C.T.'s MFA program.

Carrie Paff returns to Aurora where she has previously appeared in *The Real Thing* (2017), *This Is How It Goes* (2013), *A Delicate Balance* (2011), *Collapse* (2011), *Small Tragedy* (2006), and *Betrayal* (2004). Off-Broadway credits include *About Alice* (Theatre for a New Audience) and *Ideation* (59E59). Regional credits include *A Distinct Society* (TheatreWorks, Pioneer Theatre Company), *King Charles III*, and *After the War* (A.C.T.), *The Paper Dreams of Harry Chin*, *Stage Kiss*, and *Stupid Fucking Bird* (SF Playhouse), *Double Indemnity* (ACT Seattle), *Holmes & Watson* and *Jekyll & Hyde* (Arizona Theatre Company), *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *Tiny Alice* (Marin Theatre Company), *The Other Place* (Magic Theatre), *The Big Meal* (San Jose Rep), *Joan Rivers: A Work in Progress* (Leicester Square Theatre, London). She can be heard in Pixar's *Finding Dory*, *The Good Dinosaur*, and *Lamp Life*. Paff holds a BA in Theatre Arts and Women's Studies from UC Santa Cruz, and an MA in Educational Theatre from NYU.

The understudies for **THE LIFESPAN OF A FACT** will be **Tim Garcia (he/him)** and **Robert Parsons (he/him)**.

The creative team for **THE LIFESPAN OF A FACT** includes **Teddy Hulsker (he/him)** - Sound & Video Designer; **Brooke Cox (they/she)** - Assistant Stage Manager; **Vincent Khiết Châu (he/they)** - Lead Props; **Russell H. Champa (he/him)** - Lighting Designer; **Jessie Amoroso (he/him)** - Costume Designer; **Scott Reardon (he/him)** - Stage Manager; **Zoe Swenson-Graham (she/her)** - Fight Choreographer; **Kate Noll (she/her)** - Scenic Designer.

CALENDAR EDITORS

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DATES

Previews: Friday 6/21 and Saturday 6/22 at 8 p.m.
Sunday, 6/23 at 2 p.m.
Tuesday, 6/25 at 7 p.m.

Open: **Wednesday, June 26 at 8 p.m. (PRESS NIGHT)**

Close: Sunday, 7/21 at 2 p.m.

Shows: **IN-PERSON PERFORMANCES (June 21-July 21):**

Tuesday and Wednesday at 7 p.m.; Thursday through Saturday at 8 p.m.; Sunday at 2 p.m.

Two performances per week (WEDNESDAY evenings and SUNDAY matinees) are designated mask-required performances. For all other performances, masks will be encouraged but not required.

Aurora's policy will apply to everyone inside the building other than the actors, including all audience, ushers, and staff.

Learn more about Aurora's updated COVID-19 Infectious Disease Policy at auroratheatre.org/covid19safety.

STREAMING PERFORMANCES (July 16-July 21):

Each performance is presented as a filmed production for audiences to enjoy in their homes.

Each performance is available for 36 hours, from 12 p.m. on the performance date to midnight the following day.

TICKETS For single tickets (\$20-\$65), or subscriptions and flex passes (\$102-\$310), the public can call (510) 843-4822 or visit www.auroratheatre.org.

PRESS **Please do not reply to this media advisory for review tickets. Press review invites will be sent to selected media.**

ABOUT AURORA THEATRE COMPANY

As the storyteller for our community, Aurora Theatre Company inspires new audiences and longtime theatre lovers alike with the visceral power of live theatre. Our venues, the most intimate professional stages in the Bay Area, highlight great acting, nuanced language, and an immediacy that makes for exhilarating theatre. By telling deeply relevant stories, we're building a new culture of theatregoing in the Bay Area and contributing to a revitalization of theatre nationwide, challenging all of us to think deeper, laugh louder, and engage more purposefully and profoundly with our neighbors and our world. Aurora has an operating budget of \$2.3 million.

Aurora Theatre Company gratefully acknowledges Associate Season Sponsors: Craig & Kathy Moody. Sponsors: Tom & Amy Worth. Associate Sponsors: Rosalind & Sung-Hou Kim, Helen Marcus.

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