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Jim Logan

‘Alone Together’

Our need for art doesn’t go into hibernation just because we’re staying at home these days. If anything, art is more important than ever.

That’s why UC Santa Barbara’s Department of Theater and Dance has assembled 24 alumni playwrights from the acclaimed LAUNCH PAD play development program who have written monologues and short plays inspired by the prompt “Alone, Together.”

The brainchild of LAUNCH PAD artistic director Risa Brainin and professor Anne Torsiglieri, “Alone, Together” is a free, Zoom-friendly performance airing in four parts Saturday, June 6. Chapter 1 is at 11 a.m., Chapter 2 at 1 p.m., Chapter 3 at 4 p.m. and Chapter 4 at 6 p.m. Pre-registration is not required.

“With the devastating loss of face-to-face instruction and productions, we wanted to find a way to keep the work alive during this ongoing crisis,” Torsiglieri said. “We decided we needed scripts meant to be performed in a virtual, online theater. We wanted to embrace the limitations.”

That innovative approach is a perfect fit for LAUNCH PAD, which over 15 years has nurtured a distinguished roster of alumni artists-in-residence. The brand-new pieces of “Alone Together” are the centerpiece for the now-online directing class and provide nearly 100 roles for acting students hungry to perform. Culminating in an end-of-year “Zoom Festival” open to the public, “Alone, Together” also includes professional directors and guest artists.

“LAUNCH PAD was created to give students an opportunity to work with professional playwrights on pieces that are still in development,” Brainin said. “Thanks to these gifted and generous writers, we are able to continue that tradition in a time when it’s most needed.

“Annie and I have been knocked out by the stunning material coming in every day,” she continued. “The festival is going to showcase our playwrights, students, faculty and guest artists beautifully! The virtual experience will never be a substitute for live theater but, for now, in these extraordinary circumstances, it’s a challenge we are excited to meet.”

Participating playwrights for “Alone, Together” are: Linda Alper, Katie Bender, Jami Brandli, Leo Cabranes-Grant, Dan Castellaneta, Mia Chung, Yussef El Guindi, Anne García-Romero, Idris Goodwin, Enid Graham, Lila Rose Kaplan, Davies King, Deb Lacusta, Beth Lincks, Jenny Mercein, Brian Otaño, Lynn Rosen, Cheri Steinkellner, James Still, Alison Tatlock, Annie Torsiglieri, John Walch, Cheryl L. West and Sheri Wilner.

LAUNCH PAD provides a collaborative incubator for playwrights-in-residence, UCSB theater students and professional guest artists. Each year, new works are developed through LAUNCH PAD Pop Ups, the Summer Reading Series and fully realized Preview Productions.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.