



INTERNATIONAL CITY THEATRE

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact (for media only): Lucy Pollak
lucy@lucypr.com (818) 887-1499

International City Theatre is back on stage with hard-hitting drama 'Closely Related Keys'

LONG BEACH, Calif. (July 29, 2021) — **International City Theatre** is thrilled to return to the stage after 18 long months with a compelling family drama by multiple award-winning Los Angeles-based playwright **Wendy Graf**. Directed by **Sandra McClain**, Graf's ***Closely Related Keys*** opens **Aug. 27** at ICT's home in the **Long Beach Performing Arts Center**. Two low-priced previews are set for Aug. 25 and Aug. 26.

Oscar Best (NAACP Theater Award for *Blood Knot* at the Malibu Playhouse, lifetime member of The Actors Studio), **Sydney A. Mason** (*Safe Harbor* with Lower Depth Theatre Ensemble, *Fefu and Her Friends* and *Lysistrata Unbound* at the Odyssey Theatre), **Mehrnaz Mohammadi** (*Sand Moon* at Son of Semele, *Suppliant Women* with Rogue Machine at The Getty Villa), **Nick Molari** (*The Secret In Their Wings* at Coeurage Theatre Company; *Lear*, *Merlin*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at Theatricum Botanicum) and **Adrian Mohamad Tafesh** (making his California theatrical debut) star in Graf's hard-hitting drama about family conflict and clashing cultures.

Living in New York shortly after September 11, Julia Dolan (Mason) is an up-and-coming corporate attorney whose carefully constructed life begins to crumble when she learns she has a half-sister (Mohammadi) — a Muslim who has fled Iraq. Neyla plays the violin and wants to audition for Julliard, but Julia is wary. Is there more to Neyla's story?

Closely Related Keys reminds us, on the 20th anniversary of that pivotal event, how living in a climate of racial, religious, moral and political polarization can cause us to put up walls on a personal level.

"The sisters are both broken, each in her own way, and they come from opposite, seemingly irreconcilable worlds," says ICT artistic director **caryn desai**. "As they search for a way forward based on the little they have in common, maybe there's a lesson for the rest of us during these partisan times."

The play's title is taken from a musical expression meaning "to share many common tones."

The creative team for the ICT production includes set designer **Stephanie Kerley Schwartz**, lighting designer **Donny Jackson**, costume designer **Kim DeShazo**, sound designer **Dave Mickey** and prop designer **Patty Briles**. Casting is by **Michael Donovan, CSA** and **Richie Ferris, CSA**. The production stage manager is **John Freeland, Jr.**

Closely Related Keys premiered at the Lounge Theatre in Hollywood in 2014, garnering two NAACP Theater Award nominations and one win. *The Hollywood Reporter* praised "important issues of identity, guilt, tolerance in both a political and psychological context... told with intelligence and sensitivity," while influencer site *Gia On The Move* found the play "human... touching, painful, powerful." *Mixed Roots Stories* wrote, "a balanced and provoking representation of cultures, races and intimate relationships colliding and evolving. Graf is not afraid to tackle race, privilege and stereotypes head-on."

Graf has updated and revised the script for the ICT production.

MORE—MORE—MORE

Wendy Graf is an award-winning playwright whose plays include *Exit Wounds* (Gold Medallion winner, Moss Hart and Kitty Carlisle New Play Initiative; winner, Open Fist First Look Festival); *Unemployed Elephants — A Love Story* (Stage Raw Recommended/Top Ten, multiple “Critic’s Picks,” StageSceneLA “Scenie” award for outstanding production of a two-hander); *Please Don’t Ask About Becket*; *All American Girl* (Stage Raw Award nomination for playwriting, LA Weekly “GO!”, StageSceneLA “Scenie” award for outstanding solo performance production, Bitter Lemons Ten Best of 2015); *No Word in Guyanese for Me* (winner, GLAAD Award for outstanding L.A. theater; Helen Hayes Award-recommended); *Behind the Gates*; *Lessons* (L.A. production directed by Gordon Davidson); and *Leipzig* (LADCC Award nomination, Backstage Garland Award for playwriting, Dorothy Silver finalist). Graf’s newest plays are *A Shonda* and *Wednesday’s Child*, which is scheduled to open in Tampa, FL in September. Her short play, *The Cross and the Saber*, was commissioned by Lower Depth Theatre Ensemble’s BIPOC Voting Plays series, which is now developing the full length version.

Sandra McClain previously directed productions of *Ain’t Misbehavin’* and *Flyin’ West* for ICT. Other directing credits include *Breath and Imagination* (Virginia Stage and the Colony Theatre), which received numerous NAACP Theater Awards and Ovation nominations, *Dancing Lessons*, *Crumbs from the Table of Joy*, *The Colored Museum*, *Bee-Luther-Hatchee Oh Freedom*, *Prayerville*, *Intimate Apparel*, *Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune*, *The Fantasticks*, *In the Continuum*, *Spunk*, *Electra*, *The Women of Plums*, *Death of a Salesman*, *Antigone*, *Dark of the Moon*, *A Modest Proposal*, *Harriet’s Return*, *What I Learned in Paris*, *The Colored Museum* and *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf*. As an actor, she has performed on and off-Broadway and in regional theaters across the country, as well as in numerous films and TV shows.

Closely Related Keys runs **Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m.** and **Sundays at 2 p.m., Aug. 27 through Sept. 12**. Two preview performances take place on Wednesday, Aug. 25 and Thursday, Aug. 26, both at 8 p.m. Tickets are **\$49** on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, except Aug. 27 (opening night) for which tickets are **\$55** and include a post show reception; and **\$52** on Sundays. Low-priced tickets to previews are **\$37**.

Seating will be socially distanced (skipping rows as well as seats) and masks required as recommended by the County of Los Angeles on the date of each performance.

[Click here](#) to download high-resolution photos.

Details for Calendar Listings 'Closely Related Keys'

WHAT:

Closely Related Keys — Living in New York shortly after September 11, Julia Dolan is an up-and-coming corporate attorney whose carefully constructed life begins to crumble when she learns she has a half-sister — a Muslim who has fled Iraq. Neyla plays the violin and wants to audition for Julliard, but Julia is wary. Is there more to Neyla’s story?

WHO:

- Written by **Wendy Graf**
- Directed by **Sandra McClain**
- Starring **Oscar Best, Sydney A. Mason, Mehrnaz Mohammadi, Nick Molari, Adrian Mohamad Tafesh**
- Produced by **caryn desai** [sic]
- Presented by **International City Theatre**

WHEN:

Previews: Aug. 25 and Aug. 26 at 8 p.m.

Performances: Aug. 27 – Sept 12

- **Wednesday at 8 p.m.:** Aug. 25 ONLY (preview)
- **Thursdays at 8 p.m.:** Aug. 26 (preview), Sept. 2, Sept. 9
- **Fridays at 8 p.m.:** Aug. 27 (Opening Night), Sept. 3, Sept. 10
- **Saturdays at 8 p.m.:** Aug. 28, Sept. 4, Sept. 11
- **Sundays at 2 p.m.:** Aug. 29, Sept. 5, Sept. 12

WHERE:

INTERNATIONAL CITY THEATRE
Long Beach Performing Arts Center
330 East Seaside Way
Long Beach, CA 90802

HOW:

562-436-4610 or www.InternationalCityTheatre.org

- Visit us on facebook: www.facebook.com/ICTLongBeach/
- Follow us on twitter: [@ICTLongBeach](https://twitter.com/ICTLongBeach) and instagram: [@ICT_LongBeach](https://www.instagram.com/ICT_LongBeach)

TICKETS:

- Opening Night (Aug. 27): **\$55** (*includes post-show reception with the actors*)
- Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays (except Aug. 27): **\$49**
- Sunday matinees: **\$52**
- Previews: **\$37**

OTHER:

Seating will be socially distanced (skipping rows as well as seats) and masks required as mandated by the County of Los Angeles on the date of each performance.

PHOTOS:

[Click here](#) to download high-resolution photos.

#