



Whittier Union

HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

To Achieve and Maintain Excellence...

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 5, 2023 **CONTACT:** Andrea Garcia **PHONE:** 909-447-2403

Whittier Union Sophomore Stages First Professional Play as Young Writers Project Finalist

WHITTIER – Santa Fe High School sophomore Lucas De La Loza has been writing short stories since elementary school and has more than 100 original works stored on his Google Drive. Now, De La Loza can add “professional playwright” to his resume after his one-act play was selected to be staged as part of Los Angeles-based Theatre of NOTE’s 2023 Young Writers Project (YWP).

De La Loza’s play, “A Wicked Hallucination,” which centers on the Salem Witch Trials, ran for two consecutive weekends in May, and was one of five YWP high school student plays chosen to be performed by the Theatre of NOTE. On the final weekend, De La Loza and the other YWP student winners were presented with stipends and certificates that identified them as professional writers.

“It was an incredible experience. I feel proud and honored to see my original work transformed into a professional performance piece,” De La Loza said. “Theatre of NOTE let me participate in every stage of the production, from auditions and walk-throughs to tech and dress rehearsals. The director consulted with me regarding even minor changes to the script. I still can’t believe it happened.”

De La Loza was encouraged to submit a play to YWP by Santa Fe theater teacher Briana White, who knew of Lucas’ writing prowess through powerful monologues and scripts he had written in his drama class. After De La Loza sent her a draft of his play, she reviewed it and gave him feedback, which De La Loza incorporated into his final version.

“Lucas has always shown a great interest in writing, and is immensely talented, so I thought he was a natural choice to submit to the Young Writers Project,” White said. “I was so happy that he won. It’s exciting to see him get the opportunity to start his journey and observe the professional process. He’s a great team member, always finding ways to contribute to the class and our productions.”

“A Wicked Hallucination” is a historical drama about a family of four that are riven by the ongoing witch trials in Salem, Mass., before the daughter is accused by a jealous cousin of performing witchcraft. A corrupt judge refuses to let her defend herself, instead using his authority to ignite angry mobs.

The daughter is sentenced to be hung, but as the play ends it is uncertain if she has supernatural powers that she will use to escape her fate, leaving the audience to ponder whether there was actually witchcraft in Salem or if the townspeople were victims of a hallucination that led them to betray one another.

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After every performance De La Loza participated in a Q&A with audience members, getting a chance to discuss his unresolved ending and address other aspects of his writing process.

Both White and Lucas' mother, Celia De La Loza, agree that the YWP experience has been greatly beneficial to his development, bolstering his confidence and letting him know he is on the right path as a writer. Celia said she is thankful that an organization such as Theatre of NOTE opens its doors for young talent, especially in underrepresented areas.

"This contest really answered my prayers, as we have been looking for ways to encourage Lucas to keep exploring his creative side," Celia said. "There are so many people I would like to thank. Briana White for taking a leap of faith with Lucas; Dana Schwartz, who is an amazing director; the producer Julie Lanctot; and Santa Fe principal Craig Campbell and the drama department families who drove all the way out to Hollywood to support us."

Theatre of NOTE is an ensemble of Los Angeles theater artists dedicated to creating original work that challenges audiences while aspiring to accurately depict the cultural make-up of the city. The Young Writers Project was launched 22 years ago to encourage high school students to become playwrights.

"This is a tremendous experience for Lucas and it shows what can be achieved when you challenge yourself to perform at high levels," Campbell said. "We are looking forward to seeing what Lucas can achieve as he moves forward at Santa Fe High School."

PHOTO CAPTION

WUHS_D_YOUNGWRITERSPROJECT: Santa Fe High School sophomore Lucas De La Loza's one-act play "A Wicked Hallucination" was chosen as one of five high school plays to be performed by Los Angeles-based Theatre of NOTE through its Young Writers Project. De La Loza's play ran for two consecutive weekends in May.

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