



## **INDEPENDENT SHAKESPEARE CO. announces A new chairman and two new members to its board of directors**

April 5, 2016...Los Angeles...Independent Shakespeare Co. (ISC), announced today that **EDUARDO A. BRANIFF** has been unanimously elected as the new chairman of the board of INDEPENDENT SHAKESPEARE CO. Eduardo has over 15 years experience in creating brands and brand experiences for corporate and cultural enterprises. As CEO and Creative Director of Imagination, he stewarded brands such as Ford, Claire's, SAP, Patrón and Coca-Cola. More recently, as Partner of IDEAB he's focused on coaching leaders of creative enterprises in defining more effective growth strategies, leading more engaged teams and creating more compelling company cultures. In addition to serving on the board of Independent Shakespeare Co., he's a board director of Silkroad, Yo-Yo Ma's music and culture foundation. He is a graduate of Yale University.

Comments Eduardo, "It is a privilege to be leading Independent Shakespeare Co. as we answer two exciting questions: 'How will Los Angeles benefit by ISC providing Shakespeare free year round?' And, 'What would have Joseph Papp created, were he living in Los Angeles today?' Making sure that theater is accessible to all Angelenos will be fundamental to delivering on our vision of Los Angeles becoming community that considers theater a vital part of being an Angeleno."

Additionally, joining the board of directors are **TIFFANY BARNES** and **JACK HORNER**.

**TIFFANY BARNES** is an outstanding volunteer in the community, having committed her efforts to organizations including the National Charity League, the California Girl Friends Incorporated and ONEGeneration. She is a former board director of the California State Summer School for the Arts. Tiffany is a graduate of the University of Texas at Austin.

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Comments Tiffany, “I am thrilled to be a part of this beautiful company! Shakespeare is the catalyst for the largest, youngest and most diverse theater audiences in Los Angeles. Being part of an organization that has been including Angelenos is classical theater for almost 15 years is an honor, but also a responsibility.”

**JACK HORNER** handles all aspects of strategic corporate communications for Warner Bros. Pictures, based in Burbank, CA.

Comments Jack, “Between the Griffith Park Free Shakespeare Festival and the Independent Studio offerings, ISC is already serving more than 50,000 people in this diverse city. I am excited to join an organization with such a rich history, such a fantastic program and such incredible potential to reach and impact even more audiences across Los Angeles.”

ISC Artistic Director and Co-Founder Melissa Chalsma says, “As we begin a new chapter here Independent Shakespeare Co., we are thrilled to have such remarkable individuals on our board, led by Eduardo Braniff. Their valuable experience, their commitment to our community, as well as their expertise across the fields of communications, marketing and brand strategy, will help guide ISC on our path towards redefining what it means to go to the theater in Los Angeles. Building off of our phenomenal audience growth with the Griffith Park Free Shakespeare Festival, this board of directors is committed to making a lasting impact on the cultural landscape of our city.”

ISC’S current board of directors also includes:

**ANN BLANCHARD**, a native of Dallas, Texas, grew up in a "bookish" household without a television. Go figure! She is now a Senior Packaging agent in the CAA Television Department, specializing in representing writers and directors and launching production companies for prominent actors, producers and performers from other disciplines. Her efforts, in conjunction with those of her many talented colleagues, have resulted in shows on the air ranging from *Nashville* and *The Real O’Neals* on ABC to *NCIS: New Orleans* and *Scorpion* on CBS, *Bosch* on Amazon and the upcoming *I’m Dying Up Here* on Showtime.

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Her clients include the showrunners of *Daredevil*, *Iron Fist*, and *Grace and Frankie* on Netflix, as well as *Nashville* and the iconic *Dexter*, previously on Showtime. In addition, she reps the UK creators/showrunners of *Mad Fat Diary* and *Cuckoo*, both critically acclaimed on the BBC. In terms of actor/producers, Ann works with Robert Downey Jr., Vin Diesel, Sofia Vergara, Viola Davis as well as Scooter Braun from the world of music. Ann is a graduate of Smith College where she majored in Comparative Literature. She is a long-term board member of My Friend's Place, an organization for homeless teens in Hollywood.

**ERIC MUHLHEIM** is the Chief Financial Officer of Helix Education. Eric has been at the vanguard of strategically developing brands in education, television, theatrical motion pictures, and consumer products for almost two decades. Prior to Helix, Eric served in various leadership roles for The Walt Disney Company, including as Senior Vice President of Corporate Strategy, where he established solid growth foundations for brands such as the Muppets character franchise, the Disney Channel, and the corporation's Miramax subsidiary. As Senior Vice President of Global Development for Disney Publishing, Eric founded the company's Disney English division, spearheading the initial business plan and managing the rollout of children's English training centers in China. Eric graduated from Princeton University cum laude in Mathematics and holds an MBA from The Stanford Graduate School of Business. He is a board member and Treasurer of Temple Emanuel of Beverly Hills.

**LEONORA GERSHMAN PITTS** was born and raised in Grand Forks, ND. She received a BFA in Drama from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. At NYU, she studied with the Atlantic Theater Company Acting School, founded by William H. Macy and David Mamet, graduating with the Outstanding Achievement Award. Leonora then taught at the Atlantic for three years. Leonora appeared in numerous stage productions off and off-off Broadway in New York, in regional productions and in Los Angeles, including the long-running UCB hit *Mother May I Dance With Mary Jane's Fist* with Mary Elizabeth Ellis and Artemis Pebdani.

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Her film and television appearances include collaborating with the prolific Duplass Brothers, co-starring in the film *The Freebie*, produced by Mark Duplass, co-starring as Jay Duplass's wife in the film *Manson Family Vacation*, and guest-starring on their HBO series, *Togetherness*. As a filmmaker, Leonora's first short film, *God I Hope I Get It*, toured the world appearing in over a dozen festivals. Her second short film is *Step 9*, starring Mary Elizabeth Ellis and Artemis Pebdani.

In addition to her acting, directing, and teaching career, Leonora is a committed community activist. She served for five years on the Atwater Village Neighborhood Council, four as co-chair, and is the first recipient of the Villager of the Year Award from the Atwater Village Chamber of Commerce. Last year, Mayor Eric Garcetti appointed Leonora to be a Commissioner of the City of Los Angeles, where she is honored to serve on the Rent Adjustment Commission, working on the regulations surrounding the habitability issues of the properties under the Rent Stabilized Ordinance.

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*INDEPENDENT SHAKESPEARE CO. (ISC) produces accessible, imaginative performances of classical plays. We are the 2015 recipients of the LA Drama Critics Circle's highest honor, the Margaret Harford Award for sustained excellence in theater, a 2015 recipient of an NEA ArtWorks grant and a grantee recipient of Bloomberg Philanthropies' Arts Innovation and Management Program. Since 2010 we have produced the Griffith Park Free Shakespeare Festival in partnership with the Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks at the iconic Old Zoo in Griffith Park, the second largest city park in California. The growth in attendance is extraordinary: at our first season (at Barnsdall Park in 2004), we played to fewer than 1,000 people; by 2015 our audience grew to 50,000. Through classical theater we have attracted a community that is young (69% age 18 and under), diverse (45% identify as non-Caucasian and 75% are middle and lower income), and from all corners of Los Angeles. In 2012, we expanded our offerings with our indoor performance space, Independent Studio, where we present original work, re-imagined stagings of classics, readings and classes. Beginning in 2016 ISC is implementing a growth plan that will see a dramatic increase in audience served, scope of programming and budget while maintaining our profound focus on our community. The plans include two structures: the Griffith Park Performing Arts Stage (a project of the City of Los Angeles, Department of Recreation & Parks) and a new performing arts space (re-invented to better serve our community of artists and audience). For more information call 818-710-6306 or visit [www.iscla.org](http://www.iscla.org).*