



Autry National Center
of the **American West**

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For Immediate Release

Native Voices at the Autry's World Premiere of ***Wings of Night Sky, Wings of Morning Light***

by Joy Harjo (Mvskoke)

Directed by Randy Reinholz (Choctaw)

March 12–29, 2009

Los Angeles (January 5, 2009) — Native Voices at the Autry proudly presents the world premiere of *Wings of Night Sky, Wings of Morning Light* by musician, poet, songwriter, and playwright Joy Harjo (Mvskoke). The play is a deeply compelling journey of struggle, displacement, self-discovery, and healing. Invoking spoken word, storytelling, music, and song, Harjo takes us on a wild theatrical ride where she tells it like it is with spirit and a mean jazz sax. An allegorical work of tremendous power, *Wings* demonstrates how theater and art can bring life full circle.

This unique and genre-bending one-woman play features Harjo's original music and a score that has been pushed and molded by Grammy award-winning record producer Larry Mitchell, who recently produced Harjo's *Winding Through the Milky Way* album. Many of the songs are woven throughout the play. "Among Larry's many gifts," says Randy Reinholz, Artistic Director of Native Voices and *Wings* director, "is that he reaches into the story with the music and transports the action in amazing and unusual ways. I think the wide range of sounds he and Joy create together lifts *Wings* to the point of flight.

"*Wings* is at the heart of theater—it is a heightened ceremony, a broad intersection of art forms, an intimate act that celebrates the beauty and investigates the inherent paradoxes of the human condition. Joy is fearless, bringing all of her many talents to bear in this tour-de-force performance," continues Reinholz.

Wings was workshopped and performed as a staged reading at the Public Theater's 2007 Native Theater Festival in New York. Since then, it has received additional workshops in San Diego, Los Angeles, New Mexico, and Hawaii, and a staged reading with Native Voices at the Autry in Los Angeles.



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Performances:

Thursdays and Fridays at 8 pm

Saturdays at 2 and 8 pm

Sundays at 2 pm

Tickets: \$12 Autry members / \$20 General

Group sales: 323.466.5830 or Christi@FLAGMarketing.com

Native Voices box office reservations: 323.667.2000, ext. 354

Native Voices information line: 323.667.2000, ext. 257

Tickets are also on sale at the Visitor Services Desk during museum hours.

About the Artists

Joy Harjo (Mvskoke–Creek Nation) was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Her seven books of poetry include *She Had Some Horses*, *The Woman Who Fell From the Sky*, and *How We Became Human: New and Selected Poems*. Her poetry has garnered many awards including a Lila Wallace–Reader’s Digest Award, the New Mexico Governor’s Award for Excellence in the Arts, the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Native Writers Circle of the Americas, a U.S. Artists Fellow Grant, and the William Carlos Williams Award from the Poetry Society of America. She has released three award-winning CDs of original music and performances: *Letter From the End of the Twentieth Century*, *Native Joy for Real*, and *She Had Some Horses*. She received the Eagle Spirit Achievement Award for overall contributions in the arts from the American Indian Film Festival. She performs internationally solo and with her band, Joy Harjo and the Arrow Dynamics Band (in which she sings and plays saxophone), and premiered a preview of her one-woman show, *Wings of Night Sky*, *Wings of Morning Light*, at the Public Theater in New York City in December 2007. She writes a column titled “Comings and Goings” for her tribal newspaper, the *Muscogee Nation News*. She lives in Honolulu, Hawaii.

Larry Mitchell is a solo artist, sideman, songwriter, and music producer. As a solo artist he has released six guitar instrumental albums, range from mellow acoustic to scorching rock arrangements, which met with significant critical acclaim. In 1999 he was named the much coveted Best Pop Jazz Artist at the San Diego Music Awards, and in 1986 and 1987 he won the New York City Limelight Guitar solo contest. Mitchell has been endorsed by Ibanez Guitars, D’Adarrio Strings, and DiMarzio Pickups since the mid-eighties. As producer, Mitchell has won many production and engineering awards in various categories such as adult contemporary, pop, R&B, and rap. Mitchell won a 2008 Grammy for coproducing the album *Totemic Flute Chants: Johnny Whitehorse*, released on Silver Wav Records, in the Native American category.



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Randy Reinholz, an enrolled member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, is cocreator and artistic director of Native Voices at the Autry. He has directed close to 50 plays across the United States and Canada, including *The Rez Sisters*, *The Waiting Room*, *Proof*, *How I Learned to Drive*, *Hedda Gabler*, *Speed the Plow*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Desire Under the Elms*, *The Glass Menagerie*, and numerous productions of Shakespeare's plays. The last three Native Voices productions have been remounted at the National Museum of the American Indian in New York City and Washington, D.C. Reinholz has cosponsored showcases and Native American diversity workshops for ABC and NBC and is an annual guest artist for the FOX American Indian Summer Institute. He received his MFA from Cornell University and is a tenured professor of theatre, television, and film at San Diego State University in addition to being on faculty in the Program of American Indian Studies. Reinholz is on the TYA/USA Board of Directors, on the Advisory Committee for the Native Theater Festival at the Public Theatre, and in 2008 was named director of the School of Theatre, Television, and Film at San Diego State University.

Shirley Fishman is the director of play development at La Jolla Playhouse where she oversees projects under commission and in development. Dramaturgy credits include *The Night Watcher*, *33 Variations*, *Zorro in Hell*, *The Wiz*, *Palm Beach*, and *Screwball Musical*. Dramaturgy credits at the Public Theatre include *Dogeaters*, *Two Sisters and a Piano*, *Space*, *Everybody's Ruby*, *The Ride Down Mt. Morgan*, *A Dybbuk: Or Between Two Worlds*, *Golden Child*, a workshop production of *Civil Sex*, and many readings and workshops as cocurator of the New Work Now! festival. She was a creative advisor/dramaturg at the Sundance Theatre Lab for *I Am My Own Wife*, *36 Views*, and *The Laramie Project*. She is executive vice president of the San Diego Performing Arts League's Board and a member of the Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas (LMDA). She received her MFA from Columbia University and is a dramaturg for UC San Diego's Baldwin Festival.

About Native Voices at the Autry

Native Voices at the Autry is devoted to developing and producing new works for the stage by Native American playwrights. Established in 1999, Native Voices provides a supportive and collaborative setting for Native American playwrights, actors, and theater artists from across the U.S. and Canada to develop their work and see it fully realized.

Native Voices at the Autry produces under an Equity contract and is a member of LA Stage Alliance; a member theater of TYA/USA, the national organization for Theater for Young Audiences; and a Constituent of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for the American theater.

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