

PRESS CONTACT: press@northstarprojects.org



ANNOUNCE
JENNA & THE WHALE
VIRTUAL READING AND BENEFIT
TUESDAY, JUNE 30 AT 5:30 P.M.

Jenna & the Whale is a powerful new play written by Vanessa Garcia and Jake Cline. Please join us on **Tuesday, June 30 at 5:30 p.m.** for a virtual reading and benefit for **North Star Projects** and **The Sol Project**. Following the presentation, there will be a post-show conversation with playwrights **Vanessa Garcia** and **Jake Cline**, and director **Conor Bagley** moderated by North Star Projects producing artistic director and Sol Project artistic producer **Adriana Gaviria**. Event tickets are \$8. For tickets and more information, visit northstarprojects.org. The event will also be livestreamed on **Broadway On Demand**.

Garcia and Cline are Miami-based playwrights whose work is garnering national attention. Garcia wrote the immersive smash hit play **The Amparo Experience**, which just had a sold-out eight-month run in Miami. Garcia was a Women's Project Lab and Sesame Street Writer's Room Fellow, and her novel *White Light* was one of NPR's Best Books of 2015 and won an International Latino Book Award. Cline is a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and a member of the 2019-2021 class of Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs' Playwright Development Program. His drama *Purple Hearts* is part of this year's prestigious Greenhouse play development program at Florida International University.

Executive producing this project are **Jim Kierstead**, **William Fernandez** and **Adriana Gaviria**. Kierstead and Fernandez are producing partners who collectively have 20 years of experience producing theater, film and television.

Among their awards are a Pulitzer, Tony and Emmy. They are producing *Jenna* in conjunction with their newly formed ventures Broadway United and Broadway Virtual. Gaviria is an actress, voice-over artist, writer, director, advocate and creative producer. She is founding member and artistic producer of The Sol Project and is producing *Jenna* in conjunction with her new arts initiative North Star Projects. Gaviria was most recently seen in the role of Vero in the sold-out run of *The Cubans* at Miami New Drama.

The cast of *Jenna* is a combination of stage, television and movie veterans **Orlagh Cassidy** (*The Adult in the Room*) and **Rachel Pickup** (*Wonder Woman*) and exciting actors from Miami including **Gabriel Bonilla**, **Dianne Garriga**, **Melissa Ann Hubicsak**, **Orlando Mendez** and **Rebecca Jimenez** (*Our Dear Dead Drug Lord*).

Direction and editing is by a fresh new talent, Conor Bagley, whose work off-Broadway and in regional theaters is receiving critical praise.

ABOUT NORTH STAR PROJECTS

North Star Projects is a new arts initiative whose mission is to create a better world, one project at a time, by engendering experiences that empower, inspire, and build community through various platforms including live events and digital media. Founded by Producing Artistic Director Adriana Gaviria, North Star Projects works in partnership with artists, cultural leaders, organizations and leading theaters around the country to make a positive social impact in our communities on a local, regional and national level. northstarprojects.org

ABOUT THE SOL PROJECT

The Sol Project is a national theater initiative dedicated to producing the work of Latinx playwrights in New York City and beyond. Founded by Artistic Director, Jacob G. Padrón and driven by an artistic collective (Adriana Gaviria, David Mendizábal, Rebecca Martínez, Julian Ramirez and Laurie Woolery), The Sol Project works in partnership with leading theaters around the country to amplify Latinx voices and build artistic homes for artists of color. Through the writers we champion, Sol aims to create a bold, powerful, and kaleidoscopic body of work for the new American theater. The Sol Project launched in December 2016 with the world premiere of *Alligator* by Hilary Bettis in collaboration with New Georges, followed by the New York premieres of *Seven Spots on the Sun* by Martín Zimmerman (Rattlestick Playwrights Theater) and *Oedipus El Rey* by Luis Alfaro (The Public Theater). The founding artistic collective is: Claudia Acosta, Elena Araoz, Adriana Gaviria, David Mendizábal, Kyoung Park, and Laurie

Woolery. Brian Herrera is the Resident Scholar. Stephanie Ybarra is the Resident Dramaturg. Our partners include: Atlantic Theater Company, Baltimore Center Stage, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Cara Mía Theatre Company, Center Theatre Group, LAByrinth Theater Company, MCC Theater, New Georges, New York Theatre Workshop, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Playwrights Horizons, Pregones/PRTT, Rattlestick Playwrights Theater, The Playwrights Realm, The Public Theater, WP Theater and Yale Repertory Theatre. Our honorary board includes: Raúl Castillo (HBO's *Looking*), Junot Díaz (Pulitzer Prize-winning author), Priscilla Lopez (Tony Award-winning actress), Sandra Marquez (Steppenwolf ensemble member), Edward James Olmos (Emmy and Golden Globe Award-winning actor), John Ortiz (co-star, *Silver Linings Playbook*), Tony Plana (ABC's *Ugly Betty*), Chita Rivera (Presidential Medal of Freedom), Diane Rodriguez 1951-2020 (OBIE-winning actress, member of National Arts Council), Rosalba Rolón (Artistic Director of Pregones/PRTT) and Daphne Rubin-Vega (Tony nominated-actress, original company of *Rent*). solproject.org

**FOR TICKETS AND MORE INFORMATION, VISIT
WWW.NORTHSTARPROJECTS.ORG**

#

BIOS:

Playwrights:

Vanessa Garcia is a playwright, novelist, screenwriter, and journalist. Her novel [White Light](#) was one of [NPR's Best Books of 2015](#) and won an International Latino Book Award. Her most recent play was the immersive hit, [The Amparo Experience](#). She was a [WP Lab](#) and Sesame [Street Writer's Room Fellow](#). For more: vanessagarcia.org.

Jake Cline is a [Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist](#) and playwright whose writing has appeared in [The Atlantic](#), [The Washington Post](#), [Sierra](#) and elsewhere. Since September 2019, Cline has been the publications director at the [Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County](#). For more: jakecline.net.

Director:

Conor Bagley is a New York-based director. Off-Broadway: [Two by Friel](#) (Irish Rep). Regional: [The Adult in the Room](#) (Victory Gardens, Chicago); [An Iliad](#) (Atlas, DC). Assistant director: *Juno and the Paycock*, dir. Neil Pepe; *The Home Place*, dir. Charlotte Moore (Irish Rep); *Donegal*, dir. Conall Morrison (Abbey Theatre, Dublin). A Manhattan Theatre Club 2019-2020 Directing Fellow, 24 Hour Plays: Nationals alum and proud graduate of Yale College.

Producers:

Jim Kierstead is an Emmy, Olivier, and three-time Tony Award-winning producer of the Broadway, touring, Toronto, and London productions of *Kinky Boots*, the revival of *Pippin*, and *Hadestown*. He is currently represented on Broadway as a co-producer of Tony-nominated *Ain't Too Proud*, *Company*, *The Lehman Trilogy*, *Mrs. Doubtfire*, and *The Minutes*.

William Fernandez is a Pulitzer Prize-winning newspaper editor turned Broadway producer. In Miami, he was the executive producer of the smash hit immersive play *Amparo*. On Broadway, he has co-produced such critical hits as *American Son*, *The Inheritance*, *Frankie and Johnny in the Claire de Lune* and the upcoming *Mrs. Doubtfire*. Off-Broadway and London: *Unexpected Joy*. In Chicago, he recently finished producing the world premiere of *The Adult in the Room* at the famed Victory Gardens Theatre. On television, he has co-executive produced two seasons of the hit Amazon Prime series *After Forever*. He is the recipient of two Emmy Award nominations and a Drama Desk Award.

Adriana Gaviria is an actress, voice-over artist, writer, director, advocate and creative producer. She is Founding Member/Artistic Producer of [The Sol Project](#) and Producer of SolFest, and was Producer for LTC's 2019 [Miami Regional Convening](#). Adriana embraces the human spirit and aims to empower, inspire and build community through her work. With her new arts initiative [North Star Projects](#), she hopes to create a better world, one project at a time. adrianagaviria.com

ABOUT THE PLAY

Following a surfing accident off the coast of Dunes Beach, Florida, Jenna wakes to find herself in the company of a young man named Jonah. He tells her that they are inside the belly of a whale, that he has been here for three years and that there is no chance of escape. Jenna refuses to accept that, and she becomes determined to free them both. Meanwhile, as members of Jenna's hometown worry about her fate, an unexpected visitor arrives to challenge the bonds and beliefs of this already fractured community.

Written by Miami playwrights Vanessa Garcia (*Amparo; Grace, Sponsored by Monteverde*) and Jake Cline (*Purple Hearts*), *Jenna & the Whale* is about life, death and who we are in a community and as individuals. It's about the things we see and what we can't, the things we know and the things we grapple to understand.