



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**CAP UCLA in association with
Center Theatre Group Presents
The White Album
By Joan Didion
Performance created by
Lars Jan / Early Morning Opera
West Coast Premiere**

April 5–7 at Freud Playhouse, UCLA



"We tell ourselves stories in order to live." - Joan Didion, *The White Album*

UCLA's Center for the Art of Performance (CAP UCLA) in association with Center Theatre Group presents Los Angeles-based director and visual artist Lars Jan's *The White Album*—Joan Didion's seminal essay about California's shifting cultural landscape of the late 1960s. Jan's production is only the second of Didion's works to be adapted for the stage running from Friday, April 5, at 8 p.m., Saturday, April 6, at 3 p.m. and 8 p.m., and Sunday, April 7, at 7 p.m. at the Freud Playhouse, UCLA. Tickets for \$29–\$59 are available now at cap.ucla.edu, 310-825-2101, Ticketmaster and the UCLA Central Ticket Office.

A California native with an unmistakably cool and always illuminating style, Didion is often described as epitomizing the voice of Los Angeles. Published in 1979, *The White Album* is a compilation of flashes into the author's memories of iconic figures and events of the late 1960s from the Manson murders to the Black Panthers to student protests. By incisively expressing the impossibility of any narrative to make sense of her time, Didion creates one of the defining and enduring stories of all time.

Jan's multidisciplinary performance work juxtaposes Didion's searing, highly theatrical text—delivered in its entirety by Obie Award-winning actress Mia Barron—with a glassed-in microcosm of social unraveling featuring the participation of twenty-five young audience members nightly. The work underscores stark similarities between 1968 and the present—racial injustice, generations of inequities, and the brutality of institutional and individual violence—challenging us to look critically at the past and incubating real-time conversation around new paths forward.

In Jan's genre-bending adaptation, Barron performs the text's fifteen vignettes while a parallel performance unfolds behind her. The low-slung set evokes a mid-century home with sliding glass doors that release and contain the action on stage. Two separate audiences—a traditional one seated in the theater and a smaller inner audience of emerging storytellers—(including young artists, activists, and students onstage) — experience the work simultaneously from different vantage points. The inner audience morphs from spectatorship to participation over the course of the work connecting their experience of the contemporary moment with the radical forces at play in Didion's work. As the action builds, a tense climax forces audience member to consider the double-edged meaning of the essay's famous opening line: "We tell ourselves stories in order to live."

The performance culminates with an open forum conversation involving both audiences and the creative team, responding to a prompt created by the inner audience during the performance.

The White Album is developed in association with Center Theatre Group with support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, in partnership with Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM). Additional commissioning support came from the Wexner Center for the Arts and CalArts Center for New Performance. With thanks to Joan Didion and ICM Partners.

Funds for this production provided by Deborah Irmas, Kathleen Quisenberry, and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation multi-year grant for Collaborative Intersections in the Visual and Performing Arts. A component of the creative development of *The White Album* provided through CAP UCLA's annual artist residency partnership with the Ucross Foundation.

This multi-run performance of *The White Album* concludes CAP UCLA's 2018-19 season theater series. For more information on the remaining season please visit cap.ucla.edu.

CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

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[*The White Album*](#)

By Joan Didion

Performance created by Lars Jan/Early Morning Opera
West Coast Premiere

Friday, April 5 at 8 p.m.

Saturday, April 6 at 3 p.m. and 8 p.m.

Sunday, April 7 at 7 p.m.

CAP UCLA at Freud Playhouse, Macgowan Hall, UCLA
245 Charles E. Young Dr. East, Los Angeles, CA 90095

Program: A multimedia performance by Los Angeles-based director, writer, visual artist Lars Jan, uses Joan Didion's seminal essay to apply a uniquely inventive approach to the intersection between observation, storytelling, audience participation, choreography, and architecture.

Tickets:

Single tickets: \$29–\$59

Online: cap.ucla.edu

UCLA Central Ticket Office: 310-825-2101, Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Box office: open 90 minutes prior to the event start time.

Artist websites: [Lars Jan](#)

Credits:

THE WHITE ALBUM

By Joan Didion

Created by Lars Jan / Early Morning Opera

Performed by Mia Barron

Architectural design by **P-A-T-T-E-R-N-S Architecture**

Lighting design by **Andrew Schneider** and **Chu-hsuan Chang**

Music and sound design by **Jonathan Snipes** □

Choreography by **Stephanie Zaletel** □

Dramaturgy by **David Bruin**

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Lars Jan is a director, writer, visual artist, and the son of émigrés from Afghanistan and Poland. His work has been presented by the Sundance Film Festival, Whitney Museum, and BAM Next Wave Festival. His climate-change-themed performance installation in Times Square, *Holoscenes*, garnered international attention when the US withdrew from the Paris climate accord in June 2017. His play *The Institute of Memory (TIME)* was a *New York Times* Critic's Pick and has toured widely. As the winner of the third Audemars Piguet Art Commission, Jan built a kinetic pavilion on an acre of beach during Art Basel Miami in December 2017. He is represented by Charlie James Gallery, is a TED Senior Fellow, and serves on the faculty at CalArts.

Early Morning Opera is a genre-bending art lab specializing in technically innovative performances charting complex ideas through language and other media, and asserting the vital function of live events in our increasingly screen-based lives.

Mia Barron was last seen in Madeline George's play *Hurricane Diane* at New York Theater Workshop and Sarah Delappe's production of *The Wolves* (Obie, Drama Desk for Best Ensemble). Other stage work includes Bruce Norris's *The Pain and the Itch*, (Playwrights Horizons), and *Domesticated* (Lincoln Center), Tom Stoppard's *The Coast of Utopia* (Lincoln Center), *Spirit Control* (Manhattan Theatre Club), *Knickerbocker* (Public Theater), *Dying for It* (Atlantic Theater Company). Recent television and film work includes *True Crime: Mendendez Murders* opposite Edie Falco, the independent feature *I Smile Back* with Sarah Silverman, and a current recurring role on the Epix series *Get Shorty*. Barron is an MFA graduate of NYU.

Joan Didion is the author of five novels and nine books of nonfiction. Her collected nonfiction, *We Tell Ourselves Stories in Order to Live*, was published by Everyman's Library in 2006. Born in Sacramento, CA, Didion currently lives in New York City.

The White Album is commissioned by Center Theatre Group with support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, in partnership with Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM). Additional commissioning support provided by the Wexner Center for the Arts, Center for the Art of Performance at UCLA, and CalArts Center for New Performance. With thanks to Joan Didion and ICM Partners. The project is produced with Los Angeles Performance Practice.

About Los Angeles Performance Practice

Los Angeles Performance Practice is a nonprofit organization devoted to the production and presentation of contemporary performance by artists whose work advances and challenges multi-disciplinary artistic practices. Our mission is to support a unique and diverse constellation of artists and audiences through the active creation and presentation of groundbreaking experiences that use innovative approaches to collaboration, technology, and social engagement. Anchored in Los Angeles, their artists and projects have national and global reach. Across a range of platforms and partnerships, they build an active network of contemporary practitioners—curators and producers, artists and designers, audiences and patrons—all leveraged in service to the ideas and issues of our time.

ABOUT CAP UCLA

[UCLA's Center for the Art of Performance](#) (CAP UCLA) is dedicated to the advancement of the contemporary performing arts in all disciplines — dance, music, spoken word and theater, as well as emerging digital, collaborative and cross-platforms — by leading artists from around the globe. Part of UCLA's School of the Arts and Architecture, CAP UCLA curates and facilitates direct exposure to artists who are creating extraordinary works of art and fosters a vibrant learning community both on and off the UCLA campus. The organization invests in the creative process by providing artists with financial backing and time to experiment and expand their practices through strategic partnerships and collaborations. As an influential voice within the local, national and global arts communities, CAP UCLA connects this generation to the next in

order to preserve a living archive of our culture. CAP UCLA is also a safe harbor where cultural expression and artistic exploration can thrive, giving audiences the opportunity to experience real life through characters and stories on stage, and giving artists an avenue to challenge assumptions and advance new ways of seeing and understanding the world we live in now.

Like CAP UCLA on [Facebook](#), and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#). #CAPUCLA

ABOUT CENTER THEATRE GROUP

Center Theatre Group, one of the nation's preeminent arts and cultural organizations, is Los Angeles' leading nonprofit theatre company, which, under Artistic Director Michael Ritchie, programs seasons at the 736-seat Mark Taper Forum and 1600 to 2100-seat Ahmanson Theatre at The Music Center in Downtown Los Angeles, and the 317-seat Kirk Douglas Theatre in Culver City. In addition to presenting and producing the broadest range of theatrical entertainment in the country, Center Theatre Group is one of the nation's leading producers of ambitious new works through commissions and world premiere productions and a leader in interactive community engagement and education programs that reach across generations, demographics and circumstance to serve Los Angeles.

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PRESS REVIEW TICKETS/PHOTO PASSES/INTERVIEW REQUESTS: Contact Nicole Freeman, PR & Marketing Assistant, The ACE Agency, (909) 203-3905.

IMAGES: Available by request or register for download at cap.ucla.edu/pressimages.
Photo by Lars Jan.