

PRESS CONTACT: CYNTHIA FLEMING | 801.363.7522 | [cynthia@saltlakeactingcompany.org](mailto:cynthia@saltlakeactingcompany.org)

August 23, 2016

For Immediate Release

Salt Lake Acting Company Presents  
The World Premiere Production Of  
***Bull Shark Attack***  
By Troy Deutsch

Salt Lake Acting Company (SLAC) opens its 46<sup>th</sup> season of brave, contemporary theatre with the world premiere of **BULL SHARK ATTACK** by Troy Deutsch, running **September 7 – October 16, 2016** in SLAC's intimate Chapel Theatre.

SLAC became invested in BULL SHARK ATTACK in 2014, when it was read as part of the New Play Sounding Series. It was further developed as part of SLAC's 2016 Playwrights' Lab and is now coming full circle with its world premiere production.

Playwright Troy Deutsch is an alumnus of the University of Utah's Actor Training Program and has been living and working as a playwright and actor in New York City for the past ten years. SLAC was home to his first professional production with last season's magical collaborative play, CLIMBING WITH TIGERS, which Deutsch adapted for the stage. BULL SHARK ATTACK, very different in its style and subject matter, showcases Deutsch's gift for language and evocative storytelling.

Teaming up with Deutsch is Sandra Shotwell, his former professor from the U of U, who directs this production. Shotwell directed the first play Deutsch ever wrote as a student, PUSSYCAT, which was a regional finalist for the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival. The cast for BULL SHARK ATTACK includes SLAC favorites April Fossen (seen in last season's BLACKBERRY WINTER), Stefan Espinosa (seen in last season's STREETLIGHT WOODPECKER), and Cassandra Stokes-Wylie, who has been a part of BULL SHARK ATTACK from its beginning and was the actress Deutsch had in mind when he created the character of Tanya.

Deutsch says, about the development of BULL SHARK ATTACK: "Plays want to be developed. There is only so much you can do sitting in your room working or sitting around a table with your friends. You really do need resources, and a theatre like SLAC has a lot of resources. The New Play Sounding Series is so important because it gave us time. A problem with a play like this, with dense text, is you can't expect actors to cold read it and to mine the depths of it. A director like Sandy really goes in and gets the actors to experience instead of just tell. And then we got to bring it back to the SLAC Playwrights' Lab, where we really got to go in with no expectations; just play and go deeper and explore. I really got into the dramaturgy of the play. As a result of the Playwrights' Lab, I went on a road trip down to North Carolina and got to outline the same journey that Connie goes on in the play, looking at the places she visited and putting myself in her shoes even in a deeper way."

Shotwell says: "I'm madly in love with Troy Deutsch's gift of storytelling. He gives the actors so much to explore, so that they can enter into that lovely, transformational space, the place of magic. And I am crazy-mad in love with his writing. I've known Troy since 2006 when I taught him in the Actor Training Program for three years. In his senior year, I attended a reading of his first play, *PUSSYCAT*, and his writing abilities took me over the edge. I directed *PUSSYCAT* the next year, bringing Troy in for part of the rehearsal process. Now I'm directing *BULL SHARK ATTACK*, and Troy is here again, and the magic is happening! I think we make a pretty wonderful team in bringing his characters, story, and writing to life, right before your very eyes!"

*BULL SHARK ATTACK* is a haunting journey taken by three lost and lonely people, unaware of how their stories intertwine. On a warm North Carolina night, a girl with big hair drinks Schnapps, a boy is afraid to fall asleep and a woman with nowhere to go gets in her motorhome and starts driving. Their stories collide one fateful night on the beach.

## **WHO'S WHO**

### **PLAYWRIGHT**

**Troy Deutsch** is a writer, director, and actor from rural Minnesota living in New York City. Last fall he studied with Nicky Silver as part of The Vineyard Theatre's Fall Playwriting Workshop. *BULL SHARK ATTACK* was part of SLAC's New Play Sounding Series in 2014 and was workshopped through SLAC's Playwrights' Lab in 2016. Troy's play *CLIMBING WITH TIGERS* received its world premiere at Salt Lake Acting Company earlier this year in collaboration with Flying Bobcat Theatrical Laboratory and Red Fred Project. Troy's three-act family drama *THE ROSE GARDEN*, a semi-finalist for the O'Neill Playwriting Conference, received a week-long developmental workshop in 2014 at American Theater Company in Chicago. Troy's play *IN A TILTED PLACE* premiered at IRT Theater in 2015. His play *LAKE WATER*, a semi-finalist for the O'Neill Playwriting Conference, was developed at The New Group through the New Group/New Works Reading Series. *LAKE WATER* received its world premiere at IRT Theater directed by Daniel Talbott. Troy's play *PUSSYCAT* was produced by the University of Utah, directed by Sandra Shotwell, and was a regional finalist with Kennedy Center ACTF. Troy wrote the text for *FEAST*, a multi-disciplinary collaboration between Flying Bobcat and NOW-ID, which was performed at The Great Saltair. As an actor: *RABBIT HOLE* (Broadway u/s, Manhattan Theatre Club). Regional: *RABBIT HOLE* (The Huntington Theatre Company, The Cleveland Playhouse); *LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST*, *A FLEA IN HER EAR* (Chautauqua Theater Company). Training: BFA from the University of Utah Actor Training Program.

### **DIRECTOR**

**Sandra Shotwell** has an MFA in Acting from The American Conservatory Theater in San Francisco, an Advanced Diploma in Voice and Speech (ADVS) with Distinction from the Central School of Speech and Drama in London, and is a certified Laban-Bartenieff Movement Analyst (CLMA). She directed *Keely and Du* with Salt Lake Acting Company; the production was named one of the Ten Best Productions for '94 by the *Dessert News* and Best Production for 1994 by the *Private Eye Magazine's* Reader Poll. Last year she directed *Blackberry Winter* and a staged reading of *Bull Shark Attack*. Also she has dialect coached *Mr. Perfect*, *Two Stories*, *Exit Interview*, *God of Carnage*, and *The Persian Quarter*. She has performed for stage, film, and voice-over. Most recently she played the title role in *Hecuba* with Westminster's Classical Greek Theatre Festival. Sandra is a Professor Emerita at the University of Utah. She is overjoyed to be working again with Salt Lake Acting Company and playwright Troy Deutsch to bring *Bull Shark Attack* into full production.

### **CAST**

**Stefan Espinosa** (*Jeffie*) is thrilled to be back at SLAC! Some regional theatre credits include: Arizona Theatre Company, PCPA Theatrefest, Utah Festival Opera and Musical Theatre, The Oregon Cabaret Theatre, Old Lyric Repertory Theatre, and The Great American Melodrama. Stefan has a BFA in Musical Theatre (University of Arizona) and an MFA in Acting (University of Houston PATP). Stefan is the co-founder/director of the Utah Festival Conservatory of the Performing Arts, and is a member of the Theatre faculty at Idaho State University.

**April Fossen** (*Connie*) was last seen at SLAC in last season's BLACKBERRY WINTER. She has also appeared locally in BOOKSMART, PILOT PROGRAM, NOTHING PERSONAL, SUFFRAGE, MESA VERDE, SHE WAS MY BROTHER, and MIASMA (Plan-B Theatre Company); STAGE KISS (Wasatch Theatre Company); AUGUST: OSAGE COUNTY (Silver Summit/Utah Rep); THE RIGHTEOUS AND VERY REAL HOUSEWIVES OF UTAH COUNTY (Alligator Press Productions); TITUS ANDRONICUS, COMEDY OF ERRORS, THREE DAYS OF RAIN, AN IDEAL HUSBAND, and ROMEO AND JULIET (Pinnacle Acting Company); LIVING OUT (Pygmalion Theatre Company); and RINGS (The Grand Theatre). Regional credits include work with Berkeley Repertory Theatre and the California Shakespeare Festival. April holds a Bachelor's degree in Theatre Arts from UC Berkeley.

**Cassandra Stokes-Wylie\*** (*Tanya*) lives in New York City and was most recently seen there in Troy Deutsch's IN A TILTED PLACE as various characters at IRT Theater and Helena in A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM with dell'Arte Ensemble at Classic Stage Company. Salt Lake credits include Tanya in BULLSHARK ATTACK as part of SLAC's New Play Sounding Series, Actress Two in THE EXIT INTERVIEW with Salt Lake Acting Company, Roxy in CHEAT and Mrs. Givings in IN THE NEXT ROOM, OR THE VIBRATOR PLAY, both with Pygmalion Productions, Elizabeth Proctor in THE CRUCIBLE at The Grand Theatre and the Governess in THE TURN OF THE SCREW with UTAC. She understudied and performed with the Milwaukee Repertory Theater and he has a BFA in Acting from the University of Utah.

#### DESIGN TEAM

Set Design – Cara Pomeroy  
Costume Design – Philip R. Lowe  
Lighting Design – Jessica Greenberg  
Sound Design – Jennifer Jackson  
Projections – Patrick W. Mathis  
Asst. Light Designer – William Peterson  
Stage Manager – Jennie Sant\*

\*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States

#### WHO:

Salt Lake Acting Company

#### WHAT:

BULL SHARK ATTACK  
By Troy Deutsch

#### WHEN:

September 7 – October 16, 2016  
Wednesdays – Saturdays @ 7:30 p.m., Sundays @ 1:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m.

#### Additional performances:

Tuesday, October 4 @ 7:30 p.m.  
Saturday, October 15 @ 2:00 p.m.

#### WHERE:

168 West 500 North  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84103

#### MORE INFO:

Salt Lake Acting Company

168 West 500 North, Salt Lake City, Utah, 84103  
Box Office: 801-363-7522  
Open 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m., Mon – Fri  
[www.saltlakeactingcompany.org](http://www.saltlakeactingcompany.org)

Single tickets range from \$15 – \$42, depending on the performance.  
Student, Senior and 30 & Under discounts are available.  
Discounts are also available for groups of 10 or more.  
Subscribers always pay the lowest price.

#### **ABOUT SALT LAKE ACTING COMPANY**

Salt Lake Acting Company (SLAC)'s mission is to engage and enrich community through brave contemporary theatre. Founded in 1970, SLAC is a not-for-profit 501(c)3 professional theatre dedicated to producing, commissioning, and developing new works and to supporting a community of professional artists. SLAC has been nationally recognized by the Shubert Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Pew Charitable Trusts, and the Edgerton Foundation, among others. SLAC operates under a SPT Actors Equity Association contract and is a Constituent Member of Theatre Communications Group (a national organization for non-profit professional regional theatres), and the National New Play Network (a national alliance of non-profit professional theatres that champions the development, production, and continued life of new plays).