

*For Immediate Release*

*May 26, 2020*

*Marketing Director: Carrie Leigh Dickey (designer@carrieleighdickey.com)*

## **Spring Theatre's Film *Lock-In* Connects Aspiring Theatrical Artists to a Mentor from "Across the Pond"**

WINSTON SALEM, NORTH CAROLINA. When the world stopped because of COVID-19, actress **Anna Simmons** was in Leicester on the first leg of The Phantom of the Opera UK and Ireland tour as Confidante and cover for Madame Giry; **Genevieve Amigone**, **Lucy Duran**, and **Lexington "Lexi" Holz** were in school in the states; and **Spring Theatre** was in production of their 2020 season opener Children of Eden. Two months later, the world waits with baited breath to see the full-length, socially distanced feature film *Lock-In* which created by over 100 performers, voiceover artists, musicians, editors, graphic artists, and more. ***Lock-In* will be released in its entirety for a live premiere event on the Spring Theatre YouTube page on Friday, May 29, 2020 at 8pm EDT.**

In the film *Lock-In*, Ms Simmons was scene partners with Genevieve Amigone, Lucy Duran, and Lexi Holz—three aspiring artist from the states. Genevieve who has ambitions of either being an actress or a newscaster when she grows up remembered: "It was really cool to find out that I was scene partners with a famous actress—I was *really* surprised when I found out!" It is no wonder Genevieve was surprised! Beyond touring with The Phantom of the Opera, Ms Simmons theatre credits include Marianne in Sense & Sensibility (UK Tour), Young Cathy in Wuthering Heights (UK Tour), U/s and played Liesl in The Sound of Music (Regent's Park Open Air Theatre), and Belle in A Christmas Carol (UK Tour).

"I actually got my first professional gig was when I was 17; I auditioned to be part of an onstage singing chorus at The National Theatre in their beautiful production of Coram Boy. It was thrilling to bow on stage every night with a whole host of incredible actors," shared Ms Simmons.

Lucy, who wants to be zookeeper or veterinarian when she grows up, asked Ms Simmons: "What is your favorite production that you have been in?" "Tough Question!" responded Ms Simmons. She continued, "I have to say that doing The Sound of Music at Regent's Park Open Air Theatre was probably my favorite job so far. I'm an absolute nature nut so performing the beautiful music of that show outside, many times when the sun was setting, was pure magic to me."

But has Ms Simmons life as a performer always been rose colored? "Without struggle we cannot grow. This is so true but difficult to get your head around when you are struggling!" said Ms Simmons remembering back to the hard year she spent after training with no job. "You go from being in an atmosphere of creation, fellowship, and structure to being out there on your own. Of

course this can be so exciting, but after a while it becomes hard to pay for classes and to keep motivated when auditions dry up or if they just aren't going your way... This time gave me great resilience and taught me the incredible value of perseverance.”

When asked by Genevieve what her favorite part of being an actress was, Ms Simmons responded: “I love all the fascinating people you get to meet and work with. I am also passionate about telling all sorts of stories; sharing these stories, music, and creativity with an audience and hopefully inspiring them to think about their lives differently.”

Ms Simmons offers this piece of advice for Genevieve, Lucy, Lexi, and all other aspiring theatrical artists: “Find your joy. The life of a performer can be very tough at times—especially when work is slow or if we are having confidence issues. I think it is incredibly important to find other things in your life that give you joy. These things will help you in times of struggle. And the more joy you can find off stage, the more joy will shine out of you. It will improve your work both in auditions and on stage.”

Ms Simmons concluded, “It has been an absolute pleasure to be a part of this project. I had no idea what to expect. Everyone has been so creative and generous. It has really inspired me to dig deeper into my own creative well!”

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*For Immediate Release*

*May 19, 2020*

*Marketing Director: Carrie Leigh Dickey (designer@carrieleighdickey.com)*

## **Directors for Spring Theatre's film *Lock-In* reinvigorate the meaning of theatre**

WINSTON SALEM, NORTH CAROLINA. **Spring Theatre** created the **Digital Performance Project—a fully-online, socially-distanced performance series** as a way to fuel the creative spirit of the entire Triad and beyond during COVID-19. The Project has evolved to produce a full-length, socially distanced feature film which includes over 100 performers, voiceover artists, musicians, editors, graphic artists, and more. The film has been written and directed by **Erinn Dearth**, Executive Director, and **Dan Beckmann**, Artistic Director, who will be holding a live Ask Me Anything (AMA) **On Friday, May 22, 2020 at 8pm EDT, on Spring Theatre's Facebook page.**

When stage actor, playwright, director, and casting director **Carl J Grasso** from Greensboro, NC was asked what was his favorite part of working on the Digital Performance Project he shared: "I love working with Erinn Dearth and that other guy, Dan Beckmann. When I just say 'hello' to them, it appears that they enjoy talking to me so much—it's as if they have been shot out of a cannon and are doing somersaults in the air. They both have this amazing ambition and fortitude that I haven't seen in two individuals in a while. When they are working together, I feel sunshine and happiness. That really makes me happy. This project is making me happy."

Carl became interested in performing at a young age. He commented, "Ever since I was young, I loved making people laugh and feel better, I loved that kind of attention. When I first entered college, I had a part-time job as an usher for a student theater. During the production of the musical *Falsettos*, I remember being transfixed with the stage and just thinking I either want to be on that stage or to control that stage."

When asked about his current ambitions, Carl stated: "My goal is to become a leading man in a romantic comedy." He added. "My whole training in performance is to 'make it look real.' Whatever you are playing, it's your job to tell the story to the audience."

When Carl was asked why he chose to become involved with Spring Theatre he said: "In the past month, as the world was bounced into the Twilight Zone, paths crossed and overlapped with people that shouldn't be in the same room together. That's what happened with me and Spring Theatre. Originally it was a cold casting, and somebody forwarded the audition information to me. I just routinely applied not thinking I would hear back from anybody. Then, I realized that they were a musical theatre company and thought I wasted my time. Until Erinn Dearth told me what the intentions were for the project. My genetic code is laced with the "Adventure" gene: I can't help but go down a dark tunnel with an Indiana Jones torch. This project is another adventure, and so far I'm dodging the big boulders."

Join Spring Theatre for these upcoming *Lock-In* events:

- **Friday, May 22, 2020 at 8pm EDT**—There will be a live Ask Me Anything (AMA) with *Lock-In* Screenwriters & Directors Erinn Dearth and Dan Beckmann on the theatre's Facebook page (@springtheatreorg).
- **Friday, May 29, 2020 at 8pm EDT**—*Lock-In* will be released in its entirety for a live premiere event on the Spring Theatre YouTube page.

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*For Immediate Release*

*May 12, 2020*

*Marketing Director: Carrie Leigh Dickey (designer@carrieleighdickey.com)*

## **Spring Theatre unveils trailer to the upcoming Digital Performance Project film *Lock-In* this Friday, May 15, 2020**

WINSTON SALEM, NORTH CAROLINA. Given the unprecedented closures due to COVID-19, **Spring Theatre** wrote to it's theatre family back in March: "2020 is Spring Theatre's Season of Bravery—appropriate, considering the current state of things...Be kind. Spread joy. Sing and laugh as much as possible, touch hearts when you have the opportunity...And no matter what comes your way, no matter how terrifying it may seem, we at Spring Theatre encourage you, please: Be Brave."

Through these times, Spring Theatre has tried to encourage continued growth of participants within the Spring Theatre family and beyond by thinking outside the box and creating the **Digital Performance Project—a fully-online, socially-distanced performance series**. Their first project was a cover of the song "Lemonade" by singer and humanitarian Alex Boyé. Their second project is a socially-distanced feature film called *Lock-In*. **The trailer for *Lock-In* will be shared Friday, May 15, 2020 at 8pm EDT on the theatre's Facebook page.**

The Mendenhall family, a mother and daughter trio from Winston-Salem who have participated in a previous Spring Theatre production, commented: "We have appreciated so many things during the process of making this film! First of all, we have had FUN. We have run around our yard singing, played characters in our own living room, written songs, jumped on pogo sticks, and showered ourselves in popcorn! It has been a great creative outlet for our whole family. Even the dog has joined in...There's nothing more rewarding than creating something together with your family that you all enjoy. This film has challenged us and shown us what we are capable of achieving together. That is certainly something to be thankful for!"

Jazmine Jeffcoat, a first time Spring Theatre participant, reflected on the filming work she has done with her mother Ebonet. "This experience has been so fun to do with my mom, and it has even connected us in new ways as we worked together as actors...It was also the first time I've done an acting scene with my mom, and it was so enjoyable to see her as a fellow actor, on top of being an influential person in my life."

Ebonet Jeffcoat echoed her daughter by saying "As a mom, I know my time is limited with my kids, and I treasure any opportunity to make a positive lasting impression. This experience is definitely going to be one of those examples! We have had so much fun acting together, and I know it's helped us both connect in a way we never anticipated." She concluded, "Even though we have only met through virtual means, Jazmine and I both agree that we feel welcomed and included as part of the Spring Theatre family...It's

been such a wonderful experience to make such a special connection with people we have never even met in person.”

Precious Quire-McCloud and her daughter Mackenzie McCloud are also part of the Project. Mackenzie noted, “Spring Theatre is a family because we love and support each other, and make each other happy. A family does things together like talk together and care for each other. That's basically what Spring Theatre does: they open their arms and welcome you to join the family!”

**Join the Spring Theatre family for these upcoming Lock-In events:**

- **Friday, May 15, 2020 at 8pm EDT—The trailer for Lock-In will be released on the theatre’s Facebook page (@springtheatreorg).**
- **Friday, May 22, 2020 at 8pm EDT—There will be a live Ask Me Anything (AMA) with Lock-In Screenwriters & Directors Erinn Dearth and Dan Beckmann on the theatre’s Facebook page (@springtheatreorg).**
- **Friday, May 29, 2020 at 8pm EDT—Lock-In will be released in its entirety for a live premiere event on the Spring Theatre YouTube page.**

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May 7, 2020: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Spring Theatre's Digital Performance Project Film *Lock-In* expands reach and announces new release date

WINSTON SALEM, NORTH CAROLINA. *Lock-In*, a feature-length independent comedy film shot at a social distance as a part of Spring Theatre's

Digital Performance Project, announces a new release date: **Friday, May 29, 2020 at 8pm EDT.** With narrative tones ranging from the heartfelt to the

absurd, *Lock-In* urges us to strip away the frivolities of life on Earth and discover for ourselves what is truly, universally important.

“The film started as a performance project to provide creative outlets and keep a sense of community during a time of quarantine,” says **Erinn Dearth**, Executive Director. “But we quickly realized we were a part of something bigger than ourselves.”

The film features over 100 characters interconnected through a tapestry of vignettes that take place inside of a myriad of different households. Artistic Director **Dan Beckmann** commented, “It is pretty amazing: in addition to acting, our performers have stood in as their own cinematographers; designers of lighting, costumes, and set; hair and makeup artists—the list goes on. Their work has been consistently above expectations, and the project’s scope has grown to accommodate this level of quality.”

There are a dizzying number of collaborative elements that make *Lock-In* special including guest appearances and original radio jingles and songs. From a music standpoint alone, there are featured tunes written by 11-year old **Caroline Mendenhall** and 14-year old **Tara Flury**, as well as another original song written exclusively for the project by Hollywood Music and Media’s “Best Country Artist” award winner **Tiffany Ashton**. Also, the film features an original score composed by Winston-Salem local **David Lane**.

*Lock-In* showcases both professional and community performers with ages ranging from three-and-a-half to 70. In keeping with Spring Theatre’s mission to empower the next generation, a third of the performers are school-and-college-aged.

Demographically, 14 states and four countries are represented. Within North Carolina, performers come from 15 cities. Additionally, there are many more involved in the film who make up the SFX, video, graphics, and editing teams.

There are three upcoming *Lock-In* events:

- **Friday, May 15, 2020 at 8pm EDT—The trailer for *Lock-In* will be released on the theatre’s Facebook page (@springtheatreorg).**
- **Friday, May 22, 2020 at 8pm EDT—There will be a live Ask Me Anything (AMA) with *Lock-In* Screenwriters & Directors Erinn Dearth and Dan Beckmann on the theatre’s Facebook page (@springtheatreorg).**
- **Friday, May 29, 2020 at 8pm EDT—*Lock-In* will be released in its entirety for a live premiere event on the Spring Theatre YouTube page.**

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April 14, 2020: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Spring Theatre's Digital Performance Project, Featuring Cast of 100, Is Now Worldwide

**WINSTON SALEM, NORTH CAROLINA.** When arts organizations and venues began shutting down across the globe due to COVID-19, **Spring Theatre**—a 9-year old theatre company based out of Winston-Salem, North Carolina—was one of the thousands affected by this worldwide pandemic. Their season opener, *Children of Eden*, was scheduled to go into rehearsals in March, and with a diverse cast of kids, teens and adults and an amazing production team, it was set to be one of the highest-calibre shows Spring Theatre had ever produced. When the decision had to be made to postpone the show, Artistic Director **Dan Beckmann** and Executive Director **Erinn Dearth** felt called to create something for

the community of artists who would no longer have a live audience to practice their craft upon.

“These are unique times,” muses Beckmann. “It’s kind of exciting, you know, as someone who prefers to practice their artistry off the beaten path, and to have this opportunity where it is not only encouraged, but necessary to get creatively weird... Ooh, did you feel that rush just now? I know I did. I’ve got goosebumps.”

Shortly after the cancellation, the board of directors at Spring Theatre announced the new plan: to open the Spring Theatre season with a **Digital Performance Project—a fully-online, socially-distanced performance series.** Under the direction of Beckmann and Dearth,

performers individually contribute their pieces of the performative puzzle from wherever in the world they may be located, and they are then assembled into a stunning theatrical collaboration for the whole wide world to enjoy!

After hosting digital auditions, the production team was surprised to acquire a talented cast of 100 not only from their own community, but from Virginia, Florida, Minnesota, New York, England, Australia and more.

“The show is coming at a time where it is needed, I think,” Beckmann suggests, “where our patience for solitude is being tested and we’re all kind of locked up and afraid and are getting perhaps too much of some people and too little of everyone else. We’re writing this thing with the intention of addressing many of the everyday struggles we’re being faced with now, and to sort of bring a therapeutic quality with it; a feeling of connectedness. It’s lighthearted but insightful. It’s playing with purpose.”

As the project was beginning, a sense of community within the cast was one the most important things to Executive Director Erinn Dearth. “When you’re in a community theatre production, it does so much for the soul of the performer, not only in what you give to the audience but in the friendships you make with your fellow cast members. In putting this project together, it was imperative that we made a way to foster a sense of community.” A couple of ways they do this is through regular online live cast meetings and a hidden Facebook group for all 100 of them, and through projects like music videos.

Their first music video—a cover of the Alex Boyé song “Lemonade” was put together in just one week, and included the voices, singing talents and personalities of the full cast. The response to the video’s release online was so explosive it immediately caught the attention of the song’s original artist: “Such an amazing job,

I’m feeling so blessed to have heard what you guys did to my song,” Boyé wrote on the theatre’s Facebook page.

**Spring Theatre is encouraging everyone to follow the project in the next several weeks, and especially to tune in to the LIVE watch party performance of *Lock-In* on Friday, May 15, 2020 at 8pm EDT. The details on how to tune into the live event will be on the Spring Theatre Facebook page soon.**

Sponsorship opportunities are also available for any one who would like to be involved in supporting the arts at such a crucial time.

**More information on the project can be found at [www.SpringTheatre.org](http://www.SpringTheatre.org) or at [facebook/springtheatreorg](https://facebook.com/springtheatreorg). For additional media items, to set up interviews, or to be involved in any way with the project, please email [Erinn@SpringTheatre.org](mailto:Erinn@SpringTheatre.org) or call Spring Theatre at (336) 528-5343.**

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# A youth-inspired theatre

founded in 2011,







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**The family of  
Spring Theatre**  
fuels the creative spirit of  
**the entire Triad**  
*and beyond.*



The image features a solid blue background. In the foreground, the silhouettes of three people are visible against the blue. On the left, a person stands wearing a hat and holding a long, thin stick vertically. In the center, another person is partially visible, also holding a stick. On the right, a third person is seated or crouching, holding a stick that extends towards the right edge of the frame. The overall scene suggests a winter or outdoor setting.

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