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**IDIOT STRING ANNOUNCES 'PORT STORIES'
AN INTERACTIVE THEATRE ADVENTURE IN PORT COSTA
JUNE 7-23, 2019**

Oakland, CA (April 15, 2019) - In connection with their residency at the Port Costa Schoolhouse, sponsored by the Port Costa Conservation Society, Idiot String (Founding Producers Joan Howard and Rebecca Longworth) announced today that their upcoming site-specific theatrical production *PORT STORIES* will perform from June 7 - 23, 2019 (Saturdays at 1:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m., Sundays at 5:00 p.m.). *PORT STORIES* is an interactive adventure exploring the town of Port Costa, migration to and from California, and the meaning of home. Audiences begin their journey at the Port Costa Schoolhouse (located at 1 Plaza del Hambre, Port Costa, CA 94569), and follow the show to locations throughout downtown Port Costa. *PORT STORIES* is devised collaboratively with the ensemble, directed by Rebecca Longworth, with dramaturgy by Soren Santos and production design by Joan Howard. Tickets range from \$15 - \$40 and may be purchased online at idiotstring.org. Ticket sales begin May 1. Residents of Port Costa, Crockett and Tormey are eligible for special \$5 tickets that can be reserved online or purchased in person at the door. More information can be found online at idiotstring.org, via phone at 510-542-9009 or by emailing idiotstring@gmail.com.

The events of *PORT STORIES* begin the day following a nighttime earthquake. Odd things happen after earthquakes, after all. Some say that cracks in time open up, just like the cracks in the earth. Folks can slip through the fissures, especially if they're on their way to somewhere else. Especially if they're far from home...

Though fictional, *PORT STORIES* is inspired by the history of Port Costa and nearby communities, and themes that resonate there, including:

- Migration and displacement
- Reckoning with acts of nature like wildfires and earthquakes
- The physical landscape of the Carquinez Strait and the hills surrounding town
- The ways stories are kept, told, and passed down in families and communities

Like all of Idiot String's productions, *PORT STORIES* will engage the audience with clear and friendly invitations to interact with the actors and action of the show. The show is accessible and participatory, inviting the audience into clear and guided interactions with the performers, and

enlisting the audience's help during certain scenes. Some scenes are performed for only a portion of the audience, so each attendee has a truly unique experience of the show.

In addition to Ms. Howard, Ms. Longworth and Mr. Santos, the creative team for *PORT STORIES* includes Performer-Creators Julie Douglas, Linda Maria Girón, Leigh Rondon-Davis, Kenny Scott and Marlene Yarosh; writers Linda Maria Girón, Tessa Maurer and Baela Tinsley; and designer Megan Hillard.

"We are thrilled to continue Idiot String's residency in magical Port Costa with an original, site-specific show like *PORT STORIES*," said Founding Co-Producer Rebecca Longworth. "In 2017 we were inspired by talking with Port Costa residents about their experiences of living in a close-knit community when we created *ELIXIR OF LIFE*. Now, for *PORT STORIES*, we have immersed ourselves in researching the history of Port Costa -- and patterns of migration and displacement around the Bay Area -- to imagine a set of characters that could have inhabited or passed through Port Costa at various times. In some cases, our artists have combined their research with their only own family stories of moving and migration. *PORT STORIES* is fictional, but by inviting audience participation and interactivity, we aim to inspire curiosity about Port Costa's rich history in intrepid explorers, both young and old."

"Port Costa is a remarkable and quirky community," added Founding Co-Producer Joan Howard. "It is a town with such a rich heritage and a population of only 200, but it's just 20 minutes from Berkeley. It is also a very artistic community, and we are so honored to join the many local artists such as Clayton Bailey and Wendy Addison who are actively creating in Port Costa. For *PORT STORIES*, downtown merchants have come to our aid in heroic capacities, lending spaces to rehearse and perform including the Burlington Hotel, Bull Valley Roadhouse, Port Costa Mercantile, and Wendy Addison's Theatre of Dreams. We planned showtimes so that attendees could grab coffee at the Honey House Cafe, enjoy brunch or dinner at the Bull Valley, or explore downtown before or after the show. Our vision for *PORT STORIES* is that it's not just a show; it is a shimmering doorway to all that is Port Costa, past and present."

PORT STORIES is also part of the burgeoning movement toward environmental, interactive and immersive theatre taking place around the country and the world. These productions include varying degrees of interaction between actors and audience; in *PORT STORIES*, audience members may be invited to converse with performers, or participate in simple activities like carrying objects, writing notes, and answering questions. All contact and participation is voluntary. Audience members will move from place to place to follow the events of the production, and will stand and walk between and during scenes. This production is wheelchair-accessible; please also notify the Box Office when ordering tickets in advance to arrange accommodations for those with mobility needs or other accessibility concerns.

This production of *PORT STORIES* is made possible by the generosity of Idiot Strings' sponsors and funders, including East Bay Fund for Artists at the East Bay Community Foundation, Crockett Community Foundation, Edward J. Daly Foundation, Port Costa Conservation Society, Independent Arts and Media, the Burlington Hotel and the Bull Valley Roadhouse.

After the performance, audiences can explore the whimsical, wonderful, tiny town of Port Costa: dine at the Bull Valley Roadhouse (one of the *San Francisco Chronicle*'s top 100 Bay Area restaurants), go on a scenic bicycle ride or hike, shop for antiques and unique artworks, or (for the grown-ups) enjoy a libation or two at The Warehouse, a legendary bar boasting a huge beer list, a stuffed polar bear AND a stuffed grizzly bear! Port Costa is truly one-of-a-kind, with adventure waiting around all corners.

Site-Specific Creation Workshop: May 19

Idiot String will host a Site-Specific Creation Workshop open to the public on Sunday, May 19 at the Port Costa School. Participants will learn about Idiot String's approach to creating stories and characters inspired by the performance site -- in this case, the Port Costa School and the town itself -- and bringing them to life in performance. Led by Idiot String's Artistic Director, Rebecca Longworth, and *Port Stories* dramaturg (and Port Costa native), Soren Santos, the workshop will conclude with readings and/or mini-performances created by workshop participants. No experience is necessary; the workshop is best suited for ages 15 and up. Workshop admission is \$40, or \$10 for residents of Port Costa, Crockett, or Tormey. More information and a reservation link can be found at idiotstring.org/2019-workshop-series.

About Idiot String

Idiot String is a collaborative ensemble theatre company created by Joan Howard and Rebecca Longworth that is devoted to inciting delight and activating meaningful human connection through play. The Company creates original theatrical experiences that are interactive, non-commercial, low-tech, and steeped in evocative atmospheres. Their adaptations of popular stories featuring the Peripatetic Players have toured Bay Area parks and public spaces each summer since 2014. *ELIXIR OF LIFE*, an original, interactive play, toured Bay Area parks in the autumn of 2017. Continuing Idiot String's tradition of interactive performances, the *PORT STORIES* audience will follow the action from the Port Costa School to sites throughout the historic downtown, interacting with characters to uncover the story of the play.

Idiot String is fiscally sponsored by Independent Arts & Media, a San Francisco nonprofit organization dedicated to building community through media and the arts. More information on supporting Idiot String and the Peripatetic Players can be found online at idiotstring.org/donate or by calling 510-542-9009.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

WHAT: Idiot String's 2019 interactive, site-specific theatrical production *PORT STORIES* in Port Costa

WHEN:

June 7 - 23, 2019 (Saturdays at 1:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m., Sundays at 5:00 p.m.).

For up-to-date information, visit idiotstring.org.

WHERE: Performances begin at the Port Costa Schoolhouse, 1 Plaza del Hombre, Port Costa, CA 94569. Bus transit from BART stations will be available at designated performances, to be announced.

RUNNING TIME: approximately 80 minutes, including short walks to different performance locations.

TICKETS: \$15 - \$40 general admission, and may be purchased online at idiotstring.org. Special \$5 tickets for residents of Port Costa, Crockett and Tormey may be reserved online or in person at the door.

ACCOMMODATIONS: Accommodation for mobility and other needs can be arranged by contacting idiotstring@gmail.com or 510.542.9009 in advance.