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IMPROVology Moves to the Lobero Theatre **Santa Barbara Zoo's Hit Comedy Series of "Science Meets Improv" Has Debut Lobero Show on Wednesday, May 29 at 8 p.m.**

- Talks by Experts on California Condors and Gorillas to Become Fodder for Skits, Songs, and Silliness by LA's Impro Theatre
- Series Debuted in 2015; Has Outgrown Zoo Location
- Audience Participation; Musical Accompaniment; and "Friendly Competition" Between Teams Judged by Local Celebrities

(Santa Barbara, CA, May 2, 2019) – IMPROVology, the Santa Barbara Zoo's science-meets-comedy show, has outgrown its nest and flown the coop, landing at the Lobero Theatre. Sold-out shows at the Zoo since 2015 have proven that audiences are "batty" about this mashup of wildlife talks with



improv theatre. The format remains unchanged: two leading animal experts are interviewed live on stage, in this case, Joseph Brandt about California condors and Dr. Tara Stoinski about gorillas. Comedy skits, songs, and silliness are then created on-the-spot by members of L.A.'s Impro Theatre, accompanied by live music.

Audience participation is encouraged. IMPROVology with special guests Joseph Brandt and Dr. Tara Stoinski is Wednesday, May 29 at 8 p.m. at the Lobero Theatre.

Tickets are \$30, \$25 for Santa Barbara Zoo Members, and \$70 for a VIP ticket which includes premier seating and pre-show reception with drinks and hors d'oeuvres. Purchase tickets at the Lobero Theatre Box Office, at www.lobero.com, or by calling (805) 963-0761.



For the inaugural show at the Lobero, the animal experts are Joseph Brandt, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife supervisory biologist who oversees local efforts to bring the California condor back from the brink of extinction; and Dr. Tara Stoinski, who has studied gorillas for more than two decades and heads up the renowned Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund.

“IMPROVology has grown up and is moving downtown,” said Zoo CEO Rich Block. “It’s not unlike male gorillas who leave their families when they become mature, or California condor chicks who spread their wings and soar out of the nest. But it’s a lot funnier.”

The host of the show is Impro Theatre’s Artistic Director Dan O’Connor who is joined by company members Kelly Holden Bashar, Brian Michael Jones, Stephen Kearin, Brian Lohmann, and Jo McGinley.

Musical accompaniment is provided by Santa Barbara-based pianist Konrad Kono and bassist Dr. Michael Schindlinger (expert in the languages of wild parrots previously featured in IMPROVology). Celebrity judges who rate the skits in a “friendly competition” between the two animal teams are Independent senior editor Michelle Drown, KEYT meteorologist Alan Rose, and author and columnist Starshine Roshell.

The 90-minute show is performed without intermission.

About Joseph Brandt

Joseph Brandt is the Supervisory Wildlife Biologist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



California Condor Recovery Program. He has been a part of the condor program since 2005 when he started as a volunteer intern at Hopper Mountain National Wildlife Refuge Complex.

In 2006, he worked along the Big Sur coast tracking condors for the Ventana Wildlife Society and was the first to locate a condor nest in Monterey County in over 100 years. Brandt uses the skills he learned while mountaineering and rock climbing to play an integral role in condor nest management, an important aspect of recovering the species.

Before working with condors, Brandt worked with grizzly bears in Montana, sea birds along the Oregon Coast, and with Magellanic penguins in Southern Chile. He is a graduate of the University of Oregon.

About Dr. Tara Stoinski



Tara Stoinski, PhD, serves as President and CEO and Chief Scientific Officer for the Dian

Fossey Gorilla Fund. Prior to taking on the CEO role in 2014, she worked with the Fossey Fund for 13 years in a scientific capacity. Dr. Stoinski has studied gorillas for more than two decades and is the author of over 100 scientific publications and books. Her work has been featured in numerous press outlets, including National Geographic Magazine, CNN, and NPR.

Dr. Stoinski holds degrees from Tufts University, University of Oxford, and the Georgia Institute of Technology and is an adjunct professor at Emory University. She also serves in a number of leadership positions within the conservation and primate communities, including the Primate Specialist Group of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. Her research focus is on the fascinating social and reproductive lives of male gorillas – who happen to be the largest primate on the planet.

About Impro Theatre

Based in Los Angeles, Impro Theatre is a critically acclaimed theatre company that performs completely improvised, full-length plays in the styles of the world’s greatest writers. Recent “Unscripted” shows include those based on Shakespeare, Stephen Sondheim, and Jane Austen, as well as film genres “The Western,” and “Film Noir.”

The *Los Angeles Times* says, “Impro Theatre has evolved into a powerhouse improvisational company in full-length shows that are off-the-cuff and consistently hilarious. An indigenous Los Angeles treasure, the company should be seen — and reseen!”



In Southern California, Impro has performed sold-out shows at South Coast Repertory, the Broad Stage, the Pasadena Playhouse, North Coast Repertory, Garry Marshall Theatre, and many more. Venues around the world include the John Anson Ford Amphitheater in Los Angeles, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the Athenaeum Theatre in Chicago, Evans Auditorium at Texas State University, the Melbourne Fringe in Australia, and Theatre Adyar in Paris.

They present a full slate of improvised programming at the Impro Studio in Los Angeles, and their Impro Theatre School teaches storytelling and performance skills to actors, writers, directors as well as non-professionals who wish to expand their ability to communicate and create. Visit www.ImproTheatre.com.

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This performance is sponsored by friends of Ginni and Chad Dreier who share the love of the Santa Barbara Zoo in memory of cherished Santa Barbara Zoo family members Chad Dreier (the lionheart), Sujatha (the Asian elephant), Zoe (the snow leopard), and Cito (the Humboldt penguin).

*Known as one of the world's most beautiful zoos, the **Santa Barbara Zoo** is located on 30 acres of botanic gardens and is home to nearly 500 individual animals in open, naturalistic habitats. It is accredited by the [Association of Zoos & Aquariums](http://www.aaz.org) (AZA), representing the highest level of animal care, and participates in AZA endangered species programs for Asian elephant, California condor, Channel Island fox, and Western lowland gorilla, among others. A private nonprofit corporation, the Santa Barbara Zoo depends on community support, not tax dollars, for operations and improvements. Visit www.sbzoo.org.*