

## Site-specific theater at its best

La Jolla Playhouse WithOut Walls Festival dares to be great

By [David Coddon](#)



The Car Plays is a highlight of the Without Walls Festival

- Photo courtesy of La Jolla Playhouse

The inaugural WithOut Walls Festival(WOW) at La Jolla Playhouse is the coolest happening in town. Just a sampling of the nearly 20 site-specific theatrical works being offered through Sunday suggests that this is a festival that's here to stay. Not only that, the price is right: Tickets range from free (yes, free) to 25 bucks, a bargain by traditional theater-going standards.

But this festival isn't about the cost—it's about the work. Take Jennifer Barclay's *Counterweight: An Elevator Love Play*, presented by Moxie Theatre. The audience (a maximum of five) occupies an actual elevator inside the Potiker Theatre. With the assistance of a comely, uniformed elevator operator, we were taken up, down, up, down, up, down for half an hour, stopping intermittently at one of three floors to witness romantic scenes starring three generations of actors. Even the most claustrophobic elevator rider would be happily distracted.

How about theater on the site of UCSD's noisy Central Facilities Plant? That's how *Cornerstone*, a short play by MFA grads David Jacobi and Sarah Wansley operates. For half an hour as an audience member, you're "in" the show itself, cast as a new construction engineer on the job. While the thematic messages of this one are more muddled than in *Counterweight*, you can't help but feel more involved in the goings-on than you would, sitting in a traditional darkened theater.

Moving Arts' *The Car Plays* was among the highlights of all San Diego theater in 2012. The Playhouse has smartly brought it back for WOW, and it's just as clever and as much fun. Audience members, two at a time, move from parked car to parked car in five 10-minute intervals, experiencing mini-dramas or micro-comedies that constitute theater as intimate as it can get. *The Car Plays* alone is worth the price of admission to the festival. Don't miss WithOut Walls. It ends tomorrow, Sunday, at La Jolla Playhouse.

