



Bishop Arts Theatre Commissions Nine Plays Inspired By Nikole Hannah-Jones Bestseller **THE 1619 PROJECT**

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All nine plays will be staged February 9 – 26, 2023 for three consecutive weekends directed by Gabrielle Kurlander.

Bishop Arts Theatre Center (BATC) has commissioned nine local and nationally celebrated playwrights to pen a one-act play, no longer than 20 minutes, based on Pulitzer Prize-winning and New York Times bestselling author Nikole Hannah-Jones' *The 1619 Project*.

Each writer was asked to read the book and pen a script from a chapter that inspired them. Audiences can expect a full night of thought-provoking theatre that will spur conversation long after the curtain close. All nine plays will be staged February 9 - 26, 2023 for three consecutive weekends directed by Gabrielle Kurlander. Participating playwrights are Anyika McMillan-Herod, Erin Malone Turner, Terrance Brooks Boykin, Janelle Gray, Aaron Zilbermann, Cain Rodriguez, Zoe Kerr, Jacqueline Salit, and Jared Glenn. Serving as the Festival's Dramaturg is the distinguished Harvard professor Khalil Gibran Muhammed, Ph.D., who authored a chapter in the *1619 Project*.

Ms. Kurlander has decades of experience in all aspects of performance and theatrical production. She began her career as a working actor, touring nationally with the Broadway tour of *Biloxi Blues*. Her work as a director has been recognized with six AUDELCO Awards for Excellence in Black Theatre, including Outstanding Director of a Musical for *Sally and Tom (The American Way)* by Fred Newman and Annie Roboff and Outstanding Ensemble Performance for *Playing with Heiner Müller*. Other directing credits include Clare Coss's *Dr. Du Bois* and *Miss Ovington*, produced with New Federal Theatre and starring Kathleen Chalfant, and Newman and Roboff's *Coming of Age in Korea*, co-directed with acclaimed modern dancer Desmond Richardson.

"The *1619 Project*, One-Act Festival challenges audiences to see, not just the impact of racism and injustice on America, but also on our relationships to each other. Illuminating and sobering in equal measure, my intent is that this theatrical and creative production will be a step in the process of healing open wounds and will add to the long overdue public exploration ignited by the book which inspired the production", said Gabrielle Kurlander, who is directing the nine plays in the *1619 Project Festival*. Kurlander is a nonprofit entrepreneur, theatre director, and actor. She is a founder of the All Stars Project, Inc. (ASP), and as its CEO over the last three decades, she has led the organization's transformation from a small, New York City-based, all-volunteer effort into a national nonprofit.

BATC is celebrating its 29th anniversary season under the leadership of Playwright-In-Residence Franky Gonzalez and Executive Artistic Director Teresa Coleman Wash. Wash comments, "North Texas is in a crisis. Eighty percent of white nationalists' propaganda in the nation originated in North Dallas during the Trump administration. We see theatre, above all, as an opportunity to produce performances that allow strangers to connect with one another on civic issues that are difficult to discuss and often ignored. We are truly the fabric of our community, and that's our superpower."

Tickets for The 1619 Project, One-Act Festival can be purchased online at www.bishopartstheatre.org or by calling the box office at 214.948.0716 Monday through Friday 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Prices range from \$18 - \$50 and seats are general admission. Discounts are available for seniors, students, and groups of 15 or more. Additional details regarding programming events, hours of operation, and online ticket purchases for other BATC performances can be found at bishopartstheatre.org. The 1619 Project, One-Act Festival is sponsored in part by the All Stars Project and Dallas Truth Racial Healing and Transformation.

Nestled in the heart of Dallas' Oak Cliff community, the Bishop Arts Theatre Center is an award-winning, multidisciplinary arts organization. Founded in 1993, the mission of the organization is to cultivate a diverse and vibrant arts community committed to social impact, while creating opportunities for local and emerging artists to develop new, contemporary, and lasting works that celebrate the diversity and resilience of our community. The theatre will celebrate its 29th anniversary season beginning October 2022. BATC offers a full season of in-person and virtual theatre performances, jazz concerts, a speaker series, and year-round arts education programs. Each year, the theatre impacts nearly 35,000 people nationwide.
