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For immediate release



Center Theatre Group
In Collaboration with Watts Village Theater Company
and The Fire This Time Festival

Not A Moment, But A Movement
Five Commissions by Woman-Identifying or Non-Binary Black Playwrights
Z & Co” f/aka AzizA Barnes, Roger Q. Mason, Tahirih Moeller,
Cynthia Grace Robinson, t. tara turk-haynes

Kirk Douglas Theatre
Saturday, June 22—Monday, June 24
Tickets and Info at CenterTheatreGroup.org

LOS ANGELES (May 20, 2024)—Center Theatre Group, in collaboration with The Fire This Time Festival and Watts Village Theater Company, presents a second season of **Not A Moment, But A Movement**, an initiative created to amplify, center, and celebrate Black voices.

For this second season, a cohort of woman-identifying or non-binary playwrights were commissioned to write new plays beginning in January 2021. Five of these playwrights— **Z & Co” f/aka AzizA Barnes, Roger Q. Mason, Tahirih Moeller, Cynthia Grace Robinson, and t. tara turk-haynes**—will have their resulting works read at the Kirk Douglas Theatre in a three-day festival Saturday, June 22—Monday, June 24. This will mark the first time that any of these plays will be presented to the public.

The plays deal with a wide range of themes – from personal coming of age stories and explorations of gender identity and body dysmorphia; to experiences of intimacy and joy; to complex issues about civil rights and queer identity; and the loss of independence while enduring dementia. The final play is an imagining of when Diahann Carroll, Sidney Poitier, Joann Woodward, Paul Newman, Duke Ellington, and Marlon Brando came together to make the 1961 movie *Paris Blues* about jazz expatriates in Paris.

“We hope you will join us for what is sure to be a memorable weekend in June in Culver City, as we share for the very first time five incredibly distinctive new works from five of LA’s most wholly

original artists,” said **CTG Artistic Director Snehal Desai**. “By commissioning these new plays by woman-identifying and non-binary Black playwrights, our hope is that Not A Moment, But A Movement will introduce CTG audiences to the exciting voices that will help chart the future of American theatre.”

For more information and to purchase tickets, please visit CenterTheatreGroup.org.

NOT A MOMENT, BUT A MOVEMENT FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

Saturday, June 22nd at 3pm

Kia Was Here

Written by Tahirih Moeller

Directed by Bruce Lemon

Kia Was Here is about an 18-year-old named Kia and her 15-year-old niece named Kamille. The play takes place at two points in time: In the past, Kia copes with her first breakup by stealing her big brother’s (Kamille’s father’s) car to go on late-night snack runs. While Kamille struggles with her sexuality and her mother’s negative perception of her body. In the present, Kamille copes with the sudden and tragic loss of Kia by starving herself. Both Kia and Kamille experience hallucinations where food and objects come to life to give them advice on how to process grief.

Saturday, June 22 at 7pm

FKA I AM A BAD BLK PERSON

Written by Z & Co” f/aka AzizA Barnes

Directed by nicHi douglas

FKA I AM A BAD BLK PERSON is a continuation of the play *BLKS*: different characters, same question: why do i laugh when i am in pain?

Sunday, June 23 at 3pm

Letters From Loretta

Written by Cynthia Grace Robinson

Directed by Andi Chapman

An intergenerational love story. Loretta, a widow living with dementia, clings to a relationship with her late husband while fighting to maintain a life of independence as her daughter, Nora, assumes responsibility for her care.

Sunday, June 23 at 7 pm

Night Cities

Written by Roger Q. Mason

Directed by Nancy Keystone

A young Bayard Rustin—before Civil Rights Movement fame—must choose between his private desires as a queer black man and his public calling as an agent of social justice and civic change. Set against the vibrant labor movement of the 1930s and 40s, this piece embraces the musicality, dream imagery, and liberation of jazz playwriting to explore one man's quest for complex humanity in a world that limits who we are to how we can be used for the good of others.

Monday, June 24 at 7 pm

Blue Paris Blues

Written by t. tara turk-haynes

Directed by Khanisha Foster

Diahann Carroll, Sidney Poitier, Joann Woodward, Paul Newman, Duke Ellington, and Marlon Brando came together to make a movie about jazz expats in Paris in 1961. With the potential to shift the world on its cool and cultural axis, what was happening behind the scenes would be life pivots that would change them all forever.

BIOGRAPHIES

Z & Co” f/aka AzizA Barnes is alive on purpose in this earth drag. They did not provide a biography because they find them distinctly morbid. If someone wants to know Z & Co” f/aka AzizA Barnes’ credits, they can Google their given name: Aziza Barnes. In this play of their’s, Z & Co” f/aka AzizA Barnes, will be making their acting debut.

Roger Q. Mason (they/them) was recently touted by The Brooklyn Rail as “quickly becoming one of the most significant playwrights of the decade.” Their playwriting has been seen on Broadway at Circle in the Square (Circle Reading Series); Off and Off-Off-Broadway at MCC Theatre with Carnegie Hall, La Mama ETC, New York Theatre Workshop, New Group, The Fire This Time Festival, Dixon Place, American Theatre of Actors, Flea Theatre and Access Theater; and regionally at McCarter Theatre, Center Theatre Group, Victory Gardens, Chicago Dramatists, Steep Theatre, Serenbe Playhouse, Theatre Rhinoceros, Open Fist Theatre Company, EST/LA, Coeurage Theatre, Rogue Artists Ensemble, Son of Semele and Skylight Theatre. Roger is an honoree of the Kilroys List; the Chuck Rowland Pioneer Award; The Fire This Time Festival Alumni Spotlight and the Hollywood Fringe Festival Encore Producers Award. Mason’s films have been recognized by the British Film Institute Flare Festival, Lonely Wolf International Film Festival, SCAD Film Festival, AT&T Film Award, Atlanta International Film Festival, Webby Awards and Telly Awards. They’ve screened at the British Film Institute Flare Festival, Lonely Wolf International Film Festival, Inside Out Festival (Toronto), SCAD Film Festival, Hollyshorts, Outfest and Outfest Fusion, Bentonville Film Festival, Outshine Film Festival and the Pan African Film Festival. Mason holds degrees from Princeton University, Middlebury College and Northwestern University. They are a member of Page 73’s Interstate 73 Writers Group and Primary Stages Writing Cohort, an alumnus of The Fire This Time Festival, the co-host of Sister Roger’s Gayborhood podcast and the lead mentor of the Shay Foundation Fellowship and the New Visions Fellowship. Instagram: @rogerq.mason

Tahirih Moeller (she/her) is a writer-doodler from Long Beach, California who has worked with theatre companies such as Greenway Court Theatre, Long Beach Playhouse and PlayGround-LA. Her works include “Actually Oranges (When life hands you lemons),” a surreal comedy about a man who turns into orange juice, and “Heroes of the West,” a western parody following two cowgirls wrangling with misogyny. Outside of the theatre, Tahirih is a lifelong cartoon enthusiast, who is currently studying animation in hopes of merging her two loves: drawing and writing. Some of her notable accomplishments include receiving second place at the 2016 Hip Hop Theater Creator Award at the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival for her play “A Live Mixtape.” She was also a Playwright-in-Residence with the California Repertory at her alma mater California State University, Long Beach. In 2019, she was featured in the American Theatre Magazine Role Call Series as “People to Watch.” Tahirih hopes to continue creating art that is not only entertaining but also thought-provoking.

Cynthia Grace Robinson's (she/her) stories explore the resilience and strength of the human spirit. Her work centers characters of color, specifically Black women, highlighting the complexity, diversity and beauty of their lives. She uses her platform as a writer to amplify social justice issues, to inspire activism and to give voice to the people we rarely see represented on stage and screen. Robinson's plays have been produced in the U.S. and internationally. Works include "Freedom Summer" (North Carolina Black Repertory Company); "Dancing On Eggshells" (The Billie Holiday Theatre); "Peola's Passing" (New Perspectives Theatre Company; Festival de Teatro Alternativo, Bogota, Colombia); "When Night Falls" (Eugene O'Neill semi-finalist; Developed at Rising Circle Theater Collective/INKtank Play Development Lab); "Gold Star Mother" (EstroGenius Festival); "Ascension" (National Black Theatre Festival; New York International Fringe Festival); "Thunder: A Musical Memoir" (New York International Fringe Festival); "Nightfall" (The Fire This Time Festival); "Rome In Love" (48 Hours in...Harlem, The National Black Theatre); "In This Life" (Developed at Quick Silver Theatre Company/Playwrights of Color Summit) ; "What If...?" (The Black Motherhood and Parenting New Play Festival). Awards and honors include: Eugene O'Neill Theater Center Playwriting Conference (Semi-finalist); The Rivers Writers Unit at The Lark; Playwrights of Color Summit/Quick Silver Theater Company; Rising Circle Theater Collective/INKTank Residency; AUDELCO Award for Excellence in Black Theatre (Nominee); Final Forty Playwright, Samuel French Off Off Broadway Short Play (Finalist); Tribeca All-Access Open Stage Inaugural award winner; Best New Play IRNE (Nominee); Thomas Barbour Memorial Playwright's Award (Finalist). Publications include: "She Persisted: Monologues from Plays by Women Over 40" (Applause Theatre & Cinema Books); "The Book of Estrogenius 2012: A Celebration of Female Voices" (manhattantheatresource); "We're Not Neutral: Reset Series 2020: Collected Short Plays" (Conch Shell Press). Service: Co-director of The Fire This Time New Works Lab, a member of The League of Professional Theatre Women, and a member of The Dramatists Guild of America, Inc.

t.tara turk-haynes (she/her) is a writer whose work has been featured in various stages and screens including Lower Depth Ensemble, Rogue Machine, Company of Angeles, the Hip Hop Theater Festival, the Actor's Studio, Ensemble Studio Theatre, the Schomburg and the Kennedy Center. She is a graduate of Lang College and Sarah Lawrence, receiving the Lipkin Playwrighting Award. She has been a Cycle of Violence Fellow at Lower Depth Ensemble, Van Lier Fellow at New York Theatre Workshop, a member of Cosby Screenwriting Program, the Producers Guild Diversity Workshop, the Underwood Theatre Writers Group with Julia Cho, Rinne Groff and Theresa Rebeck and Company of Angels Writers Group. Her screenplays range from shorts to full length. She won Best Screenplay at African American Women in Cinema and was an Urbanworld Screenplay Finalist. Also a producer, she has co-produced the web series "Dinner at Lola" featuring Tracie Thoms, Yvette Nicole Brown, Bryan Fuller and Nelsan Ellis among others. As a fiction writer, her shorts and novellas have been published in various publications. She was published in "Signifyin Harlem," "Obsidian Call & Response: Experiments in Joy," "Reverie: Midwest American Literature," the international anthology "X:24", "African Voices" and Stress magazine. She has also been featured in Tamara Winfrey's Harris's "Dear Black Girl" and on several podcasts on diversity, equity and inclusion. She has just finished a novel and a TV pilot on the Harlem Renaissance. She is a founding member of the producing playwrights' collective The Temblors and was a member of the 2021 Geffen Writer's Room.

Center Theatre Group, one of the nation's preeminent arts and cultural organizations, is Los Angeles' leading not-for-profit theatre company, which, under the leadership of Artistic Director Snehal Desai, Managing Director / CEO Meghan Pressman, and Producing Director Douglas C.

Baker, programs seasons at the Mark Taper Forum and Ahmanson Theatre at The Music Center in Downtown Los Angeles, and the Kirk Douglas Theatre in Culver City. In addition to presenting and producing the broadest range of theatrical entertainment in the country, Center Theatre Group is one of the country's leading producers of ambitious new works through commissions and world premiere productions and a leader in interactive community engagement and education programs that reach across generations, demographics, and circumstances to serve Los Angeles. Center Theatre Group has produced more than 700 productions across its three stages, including such iconic shows as "Zoot Suit;" "Angels in America;" "The Kentucky Cycle;" "Biloxi Blues;" "Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992;" "Children of a Lesser God;" "Curtains;" "The Drowsy Chaperone;" "9 to 5: The Musical;" and "Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo." CenterTheatreGroup.org

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