

Press Contact:
Tim Etheridge, Director of Public Relations
510 647-2917; tetheridge@berkeleyrep.org

For Immediate Release

**BERKELEY REP ANNOUNCES FULL CAST AND CHANGE IN DIRECTOR FOR THE WORLD
PREMIERE OF
*the ripple, the wave that carried me home***

August 17, 2022 – Berkeley Repertory Theatre today announced casting for the **world premiere** production of *the ripple, the wave that carried me home* by **Christina Anderson**, directed by **Jackson Gay**, and produced in association with Goodman Theatre.

The play was commissioned by Berkeley Rep and developed as part of the Theatre’s Ground Floor Summer Residency Lab in 2018. Performances begin on **Friday, September 9** and run through **Sunday, October 16**. Press night will be on **Wednesday, September 14**.

Playwright Christina Anderson brings us a poignant, transporting, and quietly subversive story of racial justice, political legacy, and family forgiveness. Janice’s childhood was steeped in her parents’ activism as they fought for the integration of public swimming pools in 1960s Kansas and taught scores of Black children to swim. But Janice later steps away from her parents’ politics and starts her own life and family far away—until she’s pressed into speaking at a ceremony honoring her father. *the ripple, the wave that carried me home* is a moving exploration of a family’s response to injustice and a daughter’s reckoning with her political inheritance.

“On behalf of the entire company of *the ripple, the wave that carried me home*, I am saddened to share the news that Miranda Haymon has had to withdraw from the production for personal reasons,” said Artistic Director Johanna Pfaelzer. “I am deeply grateful to Miranda for their work in bringing together this extraordinary cast and design team, and for the work they have done up to this point to shape the production.

“We are very fortunate that Jackson Gay, at the personal request of Christina Anderson, has agreed to step in and carry the production forward,” Pfaelzer continued. “From the first draft I read of Christina’s powerful, poetic story, it felt meant for Berkeley Rep audiences, and I am so appreciative of the talents of all the artists who have come together to create this world premiere.”

Cast members include **Brianna Buckley** (Gail), **Christiana Clark** (Janice), **Ronald L. Conner** (Edwin), **Aneisa J. Hicks** (Helen), **Jeuneé Simon** (understudy Janice), **Paige Mayes** (understudy Helen & Gayle), and **James WDL Mercer II** (understudy Edwin).

The creative team includes **Todd Rosenthal** (scenic design), **Montana Levi Blanco** (costume design), **Jason Lynch** (lighting design), and **Noel Nichols, UptownWorks** (sound design)

BIOS

Christina Anderson (playwright)

Christina Anderson is a 2022 Tony Award nominee for Outstanding Book of the Broadway musical for *Paradise Square*. She is a playwright, screenwriter, educator, and creative. Plays include *How to Catch Creation*, *pen/man/ship*, *Man in Love*, and *Good Goods*. Her work has appeared at the Goodman Theatre, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, The Public Theater, Yale Repertory Theatre, Kansas City Repertory, and other theatres in the United States and Canada. Awards and honors include: 2021 Prince Prize, 2020 United States Artists Fellow, MacDowell Fellowship, Lily Awards Harper Lee Prize, Herb Alpert Award nomination, Barrymore nomination, and New Dramatists Residency. She taught playwriting at the David Geffen School of Drama, Wesleyan University, Rutgers University, SUNY Purchase College, and served as the interim Head of Playwriting at Brown University. Current projects: a collection of plays to be published by Tripwire Harlot Press in the fall of 2022, Public Theater commission for the stage adaptation of Zora Neale Hurston's *Barracoon*, and Ericka Huggins's biographical screenplay.

Jackson Gay (director)

Upcoming: *The Mousetrap* (Hartford Stage). Recent: *Wait Until Dark* (Dorset Theatre Festival); Karen Hartman's *Goldie, Max & Milk* (Volt Festival 59e59); *Endless Loop of Gratitude* with New Neighborhood (New Ohio's Ice Factory); Lucy Thurber's *Transfers* for Audible, MCC, and New York Stage & Film; *When Harry* (Chicago's Greenhouse Theater); *Lover Beloved* with Suzanne Vega and Duncan Sheik (Alley Theatre); *God's Ear* and *The Seagull* (Juilliard); *Kleptocracy* by Kenneth Lin (Arena Stage); *These Paper Bullets!* by Rolin Jones with music by Billie Joe Armstrong (New Neighborhood, Atlantic, Geffen, Yale Rep – Critics Pick Time Out NY, Best Production and Adaptation LA Sage Awards, Time Out Los Angeles, Connecticut Critics Circle Award Best Production and Best Director). Jackson is co-producing artistic director of New Neighborhood (newneighborhood.net). Jackson and New Neighborhood recently joined forces with Rattlestick Playwrights Theater and The Commissary to produce *Why Would I Dare: The Trial of Crystal Mason*. In collaboration with Dan Butler and DMNDR, New Neighborhood produced the first 24-hour reading of *Filibustered and Unfiltered: America Reads the Mueller Report*, which inspired more than a dozen other events across the country and was featured everywhere from the *Los Angeles Times* (“a live-theater summer sensation!”) to Breitbart News (“the single most boring and pointless way to waste your time!”). Recipient of the 2021 Guild Hall Artist-in-Residence, the Jonathan Alper Directing Fellowship at Manhattan Theatre Club, the Williamstown Theatre Festival Directing Fellowship, and the Drama League's New Directors/New Works Fellowship. BFA Acting University of the Arts. MFA Directing Yale School of Drama.

Brianna Buckley (Gail)

Brianna (she/they) is an educator and performer. She was recently in the regional premiere of *Cullud Wattah* at Victory Gardens Theater, and has also performed in *At the Wedding* (TheatreSquared), *The Last Match* (Writers Theatre), *The One and Only Ivan Tour* (Lifeline Theatre), *Romeo and Juliet* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater), *Queen of the Mist* (Firebrand Theatre), *Othello* (Babes With Blades Theatre), and *Crumbs from the Table of Joy* (Raven Theatre), *How to Catch Creation* (Goodman Theatre), and more. On TV Brianna has been seen in *Night Sky* on Amazon Prime. Throughout her years in Chicago, she has dedicated herself to integrating education and the tools of performance. She currently works with Goodman Theatre co-teaching its musical theatre intensive program for high schoolers throughout the nation, as well as Lifeline Theatre teaching elementary students, and Silk Road Rising teaching playwriting to middle school in Chicago public schools. She was also the associate director on *The Color Purple* at Drury Lane Theatre. In 2018 she received the non-Equity Jeff Award for Best Supporting Actor and accolades in the *Chicago Tribune* for the “Hot New Faces of Chicago Theatre”. She received her education at Michigan State University and is represented by Gray Talent Group.

Christiana Clark (Janice)

Christiana Clark is a proud Chicago native whose theatre career took shape in The Twin Cities Minneapolis-Saint Paul with formal training at The American Academy of Dramatic Arts LA. This is her first Berkeley Rep production. She's been a company member of Oregon Shakespeare Festival Theatre for the past seven years in *How to Catch Creation*, *The Way the Mountain Moved* (world premiere), *Romeo and Juliet*, *UniSon* (world premiere musical based on yet unpublished poetry of August Wilson), *Mary Zimmerman's The Odyssey*, *The Wiz*, *Hamlet*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Into the Woods*, and *The Taming of the Shrew*. She's appeared off Broadway in Carlyle Brown's *Pure Confidence* with Mixed Blood Theatre at 59E59 Theatre. Other notable credits include *Blue* with Penumbra Theatre, Robert Falls' *The Winter's Tale* and *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci* at the Goodman Theatre; *All's Well That Ends Well* at Chicago Shakespeare Theatre; *As You Like It* at the Guthrie Theatre; *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at Shakespeare Theatre Company in DC; *The Trinity River Plays* & *The Christiana* at Dallas Theater Center; *Gleam* at Baltimore CenterStage; *Bulrusher* & *In The Red and Brown Water* with Pillsbury House Theatre; and *Othello*, *Il Campiello*, & *Endgame* with Ten Thousand Things Theater. TV/film credits include *Stuck Between Stations*, *The Choo Choo Bob Show*, *Law & Order*, and Jordan Peele's *Candyman*.

Ronald L. Conner (Edwin)

Ronald L. Conner is excited to be making his Berkeley Rep debut. Ron currently resides in Chicago, IL with his wife and two children. He is an ensemble member of Congo Square Theatre and was last seen in Congo Square's production of *What to Send Up When it Goes Down* by Aleshea Harris. Other regional credits include *Jitney* and *King Hedley II* (Congo Square Theatre); *Sweat*, *Father Comes Home from the Wars*, and *A View from the Bridge* (Goodman Theatre); *Titanic: British Wreck Commissioner's Inquiry of 1912*, *Seven Guitars*, and *The Piano Lesson* (Court Theatre); *Paradise Blue* (Timeline Theatre); *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, and *Raisin in the Sun* (St. Louis Black Repertory Theatre); *Fences* (New Harmony Theatre); *Gem of the Ocean* (Ensemble Theatre Cincinnati); and *Two Trains Running* (Geva Theatre Center). Conner starred in the independent film *Chasing the Blues* alongside Jon Lovitz in 2017. The film is currently available to rent on Amazon Prime. On the small screen you can catch him as the character Bluto on Season 1 and Season 2 of *Southside*. Season 1 & 2 are currently available on HBO Max. Other television credits include *Chicago P.D.*, *Chicago Med* (NBC), *Empire* (Fox), *Sirens* (USA), and *The Secret Santa* (TLC). In Chicago, Connor has been the recipient of three Black Theatre Alliance Awards (two Best Actor, one Best Supporting Actor). His proudest achievement is performing in 9 out of 10 plays in the August Wilson Century Cycle. Ronald L. Conner is represented by Paonessa Talent. Preferred pronouns: He/Him/His. IG handle @theronaldconner

Aneisa J. Hicks (Helen)

Aneisa Hicks is happy to be making her Berkeley Rep debut. Her previous theatre credits include *Hurricane Diane* at Theater Wit, *The Mountaintop* at TheatreSquared, *Graveyard Shift* at Goodman Theatre, and *Pride and Prejudice* at Long Wharf Theatre. Her previous television credits include *A League of Their Own* (Amazon Prime), *Chicago Med* (NBC), *The Chi* (Showtime), and *Chicago Justice* (NBC). Aneisa received her MFA from the University of Iowa. SAG-AFTRA, AEA. Pronouns: She/Her

Jeuneé Simon (understudy Janice)

Jeuneé Simon (she/her) is an actor, director, and intimacy coordinator. She last understudied at Berkeley Rep for the 2016 world premiere *It Can't Happen Here*, adapted by Tony Taccone and Bennett S. Cohen from the novel by Sinclair Lewis. Other recent acting credits include *Intimate Apparel* (Lorraine Hansberry Theatre), *Stoop Stories* (Aurora Theatre Company), *La Ronde* (Cutting Ball Theater), *Men on Boats u/s* (American Conservatory Theater), among others. Simon is a proud recipient of the 2017 RHE Artistic Fellowship and a 2019 Directing Apprentice with PlayGround. jeuneesimon.com

Paige Mayes (understudy Helen & Gayle)

Paige Mayes was last seen on stage at Berkeley Rep in 2020 as Gifty in *School Girls; Or, The African Mean Girls Play* by Jocelyn Bioh. She most recently appeared as Awilda in the first-ever Bay Area production of the 1988 play *The Mojo and the Sayso* with Oakland Theater Project, directed by Ayodele Nzinga. Other credits include *Vinegar Tom* (Ellen) at Shotgun Players, *Single Black Female* (SBF 2) at Lorraine Hansberry Theatre, *Jazz* (Parrot) an adaptation of Toni Morrison's novel by Nambi E. Kelley,

Cinderella (Cinderella), *for colored girls who have considered suicide...* (Lady in Red), *The Colored Museum* (The Hair Piece, Normal Jean Reynolds, The Lady in Plaid, The Photo Session, and Lala), and *Midsummer Night's Dream* (Helena) at African American Shakespeare Company. Paige is a proud Aurora, Colorado native. Paige is a graduate of Arizona State University in the performing arts and dance department. She works professionally as an actor, choreographer, dancer, model, teaching artist, vocalist, and yoga instructor. (she/her) Instagram: iam_paigemayes

James WDL Mercer II (understudy Edwin)

James is a performer, filmmaker, and storyteller making their Berkeley Rep debut. Originally from the Philadelphia region, James has had opportunities to play all around the United States. Their recent credits have been George Washington/King George in *American Revolution* (Theater Unspeakable), Claude in *The Pliant Girls* (American Conservatory Theater), Cloten in *Cymbeline* (American Conservatory Theater Outloud Series), and Ryan in *In Love & Warcraft* (American Conservatory Theater & Perseverance Theatre). James has trained with Philadelphia Theatre Arts Institute, School at Steppenwolf, and is a recent graduate of American Conservatory Theater's MFA program. (they/them) @whoisjmercer_ii jameswdlmercerii.com

For the 2021/22 season, Berkeley Rep recognizes the generous support of **BART** and **Peet's Coffee**, Berkeley Rep's official season sponsors. **Residence Inn by Marriot** is the official in-kind season sponsor. Berkeley Rep is also delighted to recognize the support at the season sponsor level of **Stephen and Susan Chamberlin**, **Bruce Golden** and **Michelle Mercer**, **Frances Hellman** and **Warren Breslau**, **Wayne Jordan** and **Quinn Delaney**, **Gisele** and **Kenneth F. Miller**, and **The Strauch Kulhanjian Family**.

ABOUT BERKELEY REP

Berkeley Repertory Theatre has grown from a storefront stage to an international leader in innovative theatre. Known for its ambition, relevance, and excellence, as well as its adventurous audience, the nonprofit has provided a welcoming home for emerging and established artists since 1968. Over 5.5 million people have enjoyed nearly 500 shows at Berkeley Rep, which have gone on to win six Tony Awards, seven Obie Awards, nine Drama Desk Awards, one Grammy Award, one Pulitzer Prize, and many other honors. Berkeley Rep received the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre in 1997. To formalize, enhance, and expand the processes by which Berkeley Rep makes theatre, The Ground Floor: Berkeley Rep's Center for the Creation and Development of New Work was launched in 2012. The Berkeley Rep School of Theatre engages and educates some 20,000 people a year and helps build the audiences of tomorrow with its nationally recognized teen programs. Berkeley Rep's bustling facilities — which also include the 400-seat Peet's Theatre, the 600-seat Roda Theatre, and a spacious campus in West Berkeley — are helping revitalize a renowned city. Learn more at berkeleyrep.org

ABOUT GOODMAN THEATRE

Goodman Theatre, Chicago's oldest and largest not-for-profit theater, has won international renown for the quality of productions, the depth and diversity of artistic leadership, and the excellence of its many community and educational programs. Under the guidance of Artistic Director Robert Falls and Executive Director Roche Schulfer, the Goodman is committed to producing both classic and contemporary works, giving full voice to a wide range of artists and visions. Central to that mission is the Goodman Artistic Collective, a diverse group of outstanding theater artists whose distinctive visions have given the Goodman an artistic identity of uncommon richness and variety. By dedicating itself to three guiding principles—quality, diversity and community—Goodman Theatre seeks to be the premier cultural organization in Chicago, providing productions and programs that make an essential contribution to the quality of life in our city.

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