



**PRESS RELEASE  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**MEDIA CONTACT**  
Dayna Kalakau  
dkalakau@auroratheatre.org

**AURORA THEATRE COMPANY CLOSES 31st SEASON  
WITH MADELEINE GEORGE'S OBIE-WINNING  
*HURRICANE DIANE***

*Pulitzer Prize finalist and Hulu hit show writer tackles climate change  
and Greek Mythology in this witty satire*

**BERKELEY, CA ( May 18, 2023 )** Aurora Theatre Company ends its 31st season with Madeleine George's **HURRICANE DIANE**. **Jennifer King** (*Dry Powder*) directs **Leontyne Mbele-Mbong** (*Cyrano; Bull in a China Shop; Breakfast with Mugabe*), **Gianna DiGregorio Rivera** (*The Importance of Being Earnest*), **Stacy Ross** (*Bull in a China Shop; The Year of Magical Thinking; Leni*), **Luisa Sermol**, and **Rebecca Schweitzer** (*Wives; Bull in a China Shop; Rapture, Blister, Burn*) in this Obie Award-winning bacchanalian eco-comedy.

**HURRICANE DIANE** will be presented in-person on Aurora's mainstage from **June 16 - July 16 (Opens: June 22)**.

Aurora will also offer a week of streaming **HURRICANE DIANE** performances for audiences to enjoy in their homes. Streaming performances will run concurrently with in-person performances from **July 11-16**.

Said Artistic Director Josh Costello: "In **HURRICANE DIANE**, playwright Madeleine George explores Greek Mythology, climate change, and the lives of suburban women living on a tony New Jersey cul-de-sac, as told through a queer gardener named Diane – all to hilarious comedic effect. The playwright already has a national reputation for their work and we are thrilled to bring this play to Aurora."

**SYNOPSIS:** Carol just wants her house to have the kind of gardening magazine worthy curb appeal that will be the envy of her New Jersey cul-de-sac. But then the Greek God Dionysus returns in the guise of a butch gardener named Diane, hell bent on reversing climate change and restoring earthly order by seducing a band of mortal followers. Can Diane win Carol away from her devotion to curb appeal? Pulitzer Prize finalist Madeleine George pens a hilarious evisceration of the blind eye we all turn to climate change and the bacchanalian catharsis that awaits us, even in our own backyards.

**Madeleine George “whirls ancient myth, lesbian pulp, ecological thriller and *The Real Housewives of Monmouth County* into a perfect storm of timely tragicomedy.”**

— *New York Times*

Post show discussions for **HURRICANE DIANE** will be led by Aurora staff or members of the Creative Team, and hosted after the show on the following days: **Friday, June 23; Tuesday, June 27; Friday, June 30; Wednesday, July 5; Thursday, July 13.**

Aurora’s Friday, June 30th post show discussion will coincide with **PRIDE NIGHT: An LGBTQIA+ Affinity Night**, a celebration of Aurora’s queer community and its allies. Food and beverages will be served with special guests to be announced soon. The pre-show reception starts at 7 p.m. Patrons can purchase \$30 tickets with code **PRIDE30**.

### **HURRICANE DIANE** Cast and Creative Team

**Madeleine George’s (she/her)** plays include *Hurricane Diane* (Obie Award); *The (curious case of the) Watson Intelligence* (Pulitzer Prize finalist; Outer Critics Circle John Gassner Award); *Seven Homeless Mammoths Wander New England* (Susan Smith Blackburn finalist); *Precious Little*, and *The Zero Hour* (Jane Chambers Award; Lambda Literary Award finalist). Honors include a Whiting Award, the Princess Grace Award, a Lilly Award, and most recently the 2021 Hermitage Award, a national jury-selected prize that offers one of the largest non-profit theatre commissions in the country.

George’s translation of Chekhov’s *Three Sisters* premiered at Two River Theater in 2022, and her audio adaptation of Alison Bechdel’s comic strip *Dykes to Watch Out For* is forthcoming from Audible Originals. George is a founding member of the Obie Award-winning playwrights' collective 13P, the Mellon Playwright in Residence at Two River Theater, and a writer on the Hulu mystery-comedy *Only Murders in the Building*. Since 2006, she has worked with the Bard Prison Initiative at Bard College, where she currently serves as Director of Admissions.

**Jennifer King (she/her)** returns to Aurora where last directed *Dry Powder* in 2018. Other credits include work for the Prague Shakespeare Company (associate artist), Capital Stage,

Shakespeare Napa Valley (Founder and Artistic Director), SF PlayGround (company member), Berkeley Playhouse, Sonoma County Repertory Theater, Cinnabar Theater, Symmetry Theater, and Actors' Reading Collective. She is also an award-winning theater professor at Napa Valley College and executive communication coach.

**Leontyne Mbele-Mbong (she/her)** returns to Aurora where she recently appeared as Roxane in *Cyrano*. Other Aurora credits include *Bull in a China Shop*; *Temple*; and *Breakfast with Mugabe*. Around the Bay Area, she was recently seen in *Fefu and Her Friends* at A.C.T. and *Lear* at Cal Shakes. Other career highlights include roles in *Medea* and *Antony & Cleopatra*, both with the African-American Shakespeare Company; *The Half-Life of Marie Curie* (TheatreSquared); *Watch on the Rhine* (Berkeley Rep/Guthrie Theatre); *Top Girls* (Shotgun Players); *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot* (Aluminous Collective); *Fences* (Altarena Playhouse); *Andromache* (Central Works); *Candide* (Lamplighters Music Theatre); *Twelfth Night* (Woman's Will); *Intimate Apparel* (Solano College; Harbor Theater); and *Richard III* (African-American Shakespeare; Impact Theatre; Woman's Will).

**Gianna DiGregorio Rivera (she/they)** is a Bay Area-born actor and musician last seen at the Aurora in *The Importance of Being Earnest* (2019). Recent credits include *Romeo y Juliet* (California Shakespeare Theater); *Quixote Nuevo* tour (Hartford Stage, Huntington Theatre Company, and Alley Theatre); *Arcadia* (Shotgun Players); and *Ageless* (Quantum Dragon Theatre). DiGregorio Rivera recently received their M.A. in Sexuality Studies from San Francisco State University, where they examined the intersections of queer, BIPOC identities, and intimacy choreography.

**Stacy Ross (she/they)** returns to Aurora where she was last seen in 2019's *Bull In A China Shop*, directed by Associate Artistic Director Dawn Monique Williams. Other Aurora credits include *The Year of Magical Thinking*; *Leni*; *A Kind of Alaska*; *Hedda Gabler*; *Man of Destiny*; and *Gidion's Knot*. Most recent credits include *Clue* (SF Playhouse); *Fefu and Her Friends* (A.C.T. Strand); *Communion* (A.C.T. Stream); and *They Promised Her the Moon* (Theatreworks). Locally she has been seen at Cal Shakes, Cutting Ball, SF Playhouse, Custom Made, A.C.T., Berkeley Rep, Playground, and San Jose Rep.

**Luisa Sermol (she/her)** makes her Aurora debut. She was seen most recently in Corrib Theatre's *Myra's Story*. Bay Area credits include *In Every Generation*; *It's a Wonderful Life*; *Archduke*; *They Promised Her the Moon* (Theatreworks); *The Siegel* (City Lights); and, *Noises Off* and *It's Only a Play* (Hillbarn). Regionally, Sermol has been seen on Broadway at Roundabout, as well as Lincoln Center, Classic Stage Company, Portland Center Stage, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Artists Repertory Theatre, Badass Theater, Broadway Rose Theatre Company. Film and TV credits include appearances on *Grimm*, *Leverage*, *Zero Effect*, and *Insect Poetry*. Sermol is a graduate of The Juilliard School and a founding member of The Actors' Reading Collective (ARC).

**Rebecca Schweitzer (she/her)** returns to Aurora where she was last seen in *Wives; Bull In A China Shop; Rapture, Blister, Burn; Small Tragedy*, as well as the World Premiere of *The First Grade*. Rebecca has also appeared at Marin Theatre Company, Center Rep, SF Playhouse, Pacific Conservatory of Performing Arts. Her voice can be heard on TV and the radio, as well as in various video games (*The Walking Dead; Back to the Future; World of Warcraft: Legion; League of Legends*). Schweitzer is a graduate of the Pacific Conservatory of Performing Arts.

The creative team for **HURRICANE DIANE** includes **Ray Gonzalez (they/them)**--Stage Manager; **Sasha King (she/her)**--Assistant Stage Manager; **Kate Boyd (she/her)**--Scenic; **Kurt Landisman (he/him)**--Lighting; **Brooke Jennings (she/her)**--Costumes; **Lana Palmer**-Sound; **Leah Hammond (they/them)**--Lead Props; **Natalie Greene (she/her)**--Intimacy Choreographer & Movement Director.

### **CALENDAR EDITORS**

Aurora Theatre Company ends its 31st season with Madeleine George's **HURRICANE DIANE**. **Jennifer King** (*Dry Powder*) directs **Leontyne Mbele-Mbong** (*Cyrano; Bull in a China Shop; Breakfast with Mugabe*), **Gianna DiGregorio Rivera** (*The Importance of Being Earnest*), **Stacy Ross** (*Bull in a China Shop; The Year of Magical Thinking; Leni*), **Luisa Sermol**, and **Rebecca Schweitzer** (*Wives; Bull in a China Shop; Rapture, Blister, Burn*) in this Obie Award-winning bacchanalian eco-comedy.

**HURRICANE DIANE** will be presented in-person on Aurora's mainstage from **June 16 - July 16 (Opens: June 22)**.

Aurora will also offer a week of streaming **HURRICANE DIANE** performances for audiences to enjoy in their homes. Streaming performances will run concurrently with in-person performances from **July 11-16**.

### **DATES**

**Previews:** Friday 6/16 and Saturday 6/17 at 8 p.m.

Sunday, 6/18 at 2 p.m.

Tuesday, 6/20 and Wednesday, 6/21 at 7 p.m.

**Open: Thursday, June 22 at 8 p.m. (PRESS NIGHT)**

**Close:** Sunday, July 16 at 2 p.m.

**Shows: IN-PERSON PERFORMANCES (June 16 - July 16):**

Tuesday and Wednesday at 7 p.m.; Thursday through Saturday at 8 p.m.;  
Sunday at 2 p.m.

**STREAMING PERFORMANCES (July 11 - 16):**

Each performance is presented as a filmed production for audiences to enjoy in their homes.

Each performance is available for 36 hours, from 12 p.m. on the performance date to midnight the following day.

**TICKETS**

For single tickets (\$20-\$75) or subscriptions (\$200-\$385), the public can call **(510) 843-4822** or visit [www.auroratheatre.org](http://www.auroratheatre.org).

**PRESS**

**Please do not reply to this media advisory for review tickets. Press review invites will be sent to selected media.**

**ABOUT AURORA THEATRE COMPANY**

As the storyteller for our community, Aurora Theatre Company inspires new audiences and longtime theatre lovers alike with the visceral power of live theatre. Our venues, the most intimate professional stages in the Bay Area, highlight great acting, nuanced language, and an immediacy that makes for exhilarating theatre. By telling deeply relevant stories, we're building a new culture of theatregoing in the Bay Area and contributing to a revitalization of theatre nationwide, challenging all of us to think deeper, laugh louder, and engage more purposefully and profoundly with our neighbors and our world. Aurora has an operating budget of \$2.3 million.

*Aurora Theatre Company gratefully acknowledges Executive Season Sponsors: Craig & Kathy Moody. Sponsors: Ellen & Barry Levine.*

*Aurora Theatre Company gratefully acknowledges the following foundations and government agencies for their support: Alameda County Arts Commission, City of Berkeley Civic Arts Program, California Arts Council, California Office of the Small Business Advocate, National Endowment for the Arts, Harold & Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust, The Wood Foundation.*

# # #

