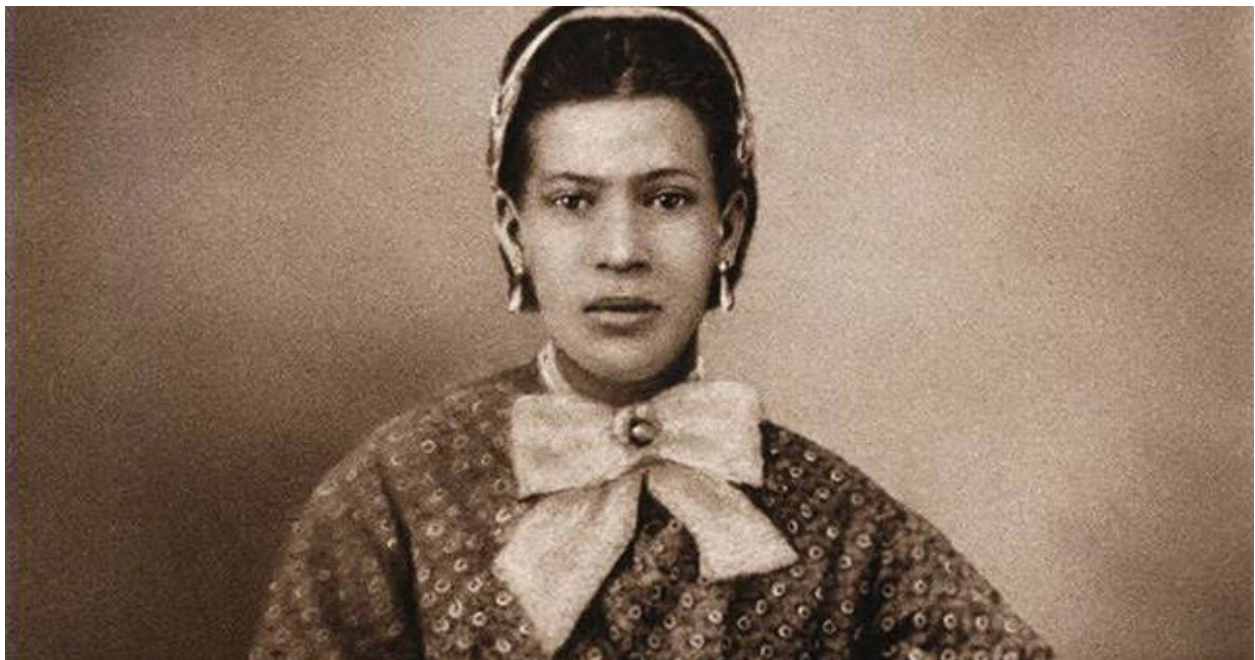




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**AURORA THEATRE COMPANY ANNOUNCES
NEW ORIGINATE + GENERATE COMMISSION**

Britney Frazier and Margo Hall Are Newest O+G Artists



New Orleans Voodoo Queen Marie Laveau (1794-1881). *(Archival photograph).*

BERKELEY, CALIF. (Oct. 3, 2018) — Aurora Theatre Company announces the company's

newest Originate + Generate (O+G) artist commission. Prominent Bay Area theatre makers **Britney Frazier** and **Margo Hall** have been selected to create a new, evening-long work specifically for one of the Aurora stages. Its working title is *LAVEAU*.

O+G is the company's new works initiative to promote the creation of forward-looking theater, including commissions, workshops, readings, and full productions of new plays. **Frazier** and **Hall** will have the opportunity to create the new work through a process of their own devising. Prior O+G artist **Jonathan Spector** (award-winning *Eureka Day*) and current O+G artists **Beth Wilmurt** and **Christopher Chen** have all chosen their own method of developing their new O+G work.

Frazier and Hall will collaborate on the commission and will receive initial financial support in the form of a \$5,000 grant, resources and physical space in which to create the new O+G work.

Aurora Artistic Director Tom Ross states, "I'm thrilled to add Britney and Margo to our O+G roster of extraordinary local theatre artists. An abbreviated version was originally presented by TheatreFirst earlier this year, and has served as a springboard for the women to create a full-length unique piece of theatre for one of Aurora's stages. It is a project Britney and Margo passionately want to further explore."

The subject of Frazier and Hall's fascinating work-in-progress is the New Orleans Voodoo Queen Marie Laveau (1794-1881). A descendant of colonial white settlers, black slaves and free people of color of southern Louisiana, Laveau was a practitioner of Louisiana Voodoo, a set of spiritual and folk practices (including dancing and rituals), beliefs, and languages developed from the traditions of the West African diaspora, and rooted in ancestor worship.

Laveau, a beauty parlor owner with a wealthy clientele, reportedly held Voodoo ceremonies in New Orleans' Congo Square (now within Louis Armstrong Park) as well as on the banks of nearby Lake Pontchartrain. Legend has it that she used her influence and magic to help with

community service, nursing yellow fever patients, and posting bail for free women of color.

A story braided from history, legend and lore, *LAVEAU* offers Frazier and Hall a rich narrative with which to create their O+G commission.

Frazier, a director, playwright and teaching artist, is writing the new work. “My artistic wish for *Laveau* is to create a performance ritual that invokes the feeling of one of Laveau’s Sunday ceremonies in Congo Square imbued with storytelling, music, dance, and conjuring while hopefully providing enlightenment about the origins of ‘black magic,’ holistic healing, New Orleans historical mysticism and The Religion,” she said.

Hall will direct Aurora’s O+G work-in-progress *LAVEAU*. “I am excited about going beyond a traditional theatrical experience with this piece—digging deeper in the the ritual of myth, Voodoo and storytelling through the lens of Marie Laveau,” said the actor, director and playwright.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS



BRITNEY FRAZIER’S stage credits include Campo Santo, Cutting Ball Theatre, Shotgun Players, Ubuntu Theater Project, Marin Theater Company, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, San Francisco Playhouse, ACT’s Strand Theatre, and the Lorraine Hansberry Theatre. As a teaching artist, she’s directed for Disney Theatrical NY and Bay Area Children’s Theater as a part of their Disney Musicals in Schools Program, and taught with California Shakespeare Theater, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts and The Marsh SF. She has written three plays, *Obeah*, *Dysphoria*, and *Pressure High*. Berkeley’s TheatreFirst commissioned Frazier to write *Laveau: A Conjuring of Marie Laveau*, a short, solo ritual performance tribute to Marie Laveau that was directed by Margo Hall and performed by actor Dezi Solèy in September 2018 as part of an evening of four short solo performances. A former directing apprentice with

Berkeley Repertory Theatre's Playground Series, Frazier recently directed *Take The Ticket* at TheatreFirst.



MARGO HALL (*Trouble In Mind*; Global Age Project director) has performed and directed in theaters throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. She was last seen onstage in *Skeleton Crew*, a co-production with Marin Theatre Company and Theatreworks. She recently directed *BARBECUE* (which she also starred in) for San Francisco Playhouse and *Brownsville, b-side for tray* for Shotgun Players. Her writing credits include *The People's Temple* at Berkeley Repertory Theater, which won the 2005 Will Glickman Playwright Award for best new play in the Bay Area, and *Be Bop Baby, a Musical Memoir*, a semi-autobiographical piece at Z Space in San Francisco, featuring the Marcus Shelby 15-piece orchestra. She is a founding member of the award-winning, San Francisco-based multi-cultural ensemble Campo Santo, and has directed, performed and collaborated on new plays with artists such as Naomi Iizuka, Jessica Hagedorn, Philip Kan Gotanda, and Octavio Solis.

Aurora Theatre Company opened its 27th season in September with the critically acclaimed **DETROIT '67**, directed by Darryl V. Jones. The season continues with the West Coast premiere of Jonathan Safran Foer's best-selling novel **EVERYTHING IS ILLUMINATED**, adapted for stage by Simon Block, directed by Aurora artistic director Tom Ross. August Strindberg's acerbic tragicomedy **CREDITORS** follows in an exciting new version and translation by Scottish playwright David Greig, directed by Barbara Damashek. Tracy Ward helms the Bay Area premiere of Anna Ziegler's thought-provoking **ACTUALLY**. Next is Oscar Wilde's comedy classic **THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST**, directed by Aurora literary associate Josh Costello. The season closes with the Bay Area premiere of Joan Didion's theatricalized memoir **THE YEAR OF MAGICAL THINKING**, directed by Nancy Carlin.

For tickets or more information about Aurora Theatre Company, the public can call

(510) 843-4822 or visit auroratheatre.org.

Aurora Theatre Company gratefully acknowledges the support in part of O+G by Fleishhacker Foundation, The Harold & Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust, The Sam Mazza Foundation, The Tournesol Project, and Hillary & Jonathan Reinis.

Aurora Theatre Company gratefully acknowledges the following foundations and government agencies for their support: Actors' Equity Foundation, Alameda County Arts Commission, Berkeley Civic Arts Program & Civic Arts Commission, The Bernard Osher Foundation, The Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust, MUFJ Union Bank Foundation, Sam Mazza Foundation, The Shubert Foundation, Theatre Bay Area, The Tournesol Project, and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

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