

GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE

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CAST ANNOUNCED FOR GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE WORLD PREMIERE OF “BLACK CYPRESS BAYOU”

FEATURING AMBER CHARDAE ROBINSON, BRANDEE EVANS,
ANGELA LEWIS AND KIMBERLY SCOTT

WRITTEN BY KRISTEN ADELE CALHOUN AND DIRECTED BY TIFFANY NICHOLE GREENE

PREVIEWS BEGIN FEBRUARY 7 - OPENING NIGHT IS FEBRUARY 15

LOS ANGELES (December 6, 2023) – Geffen Playhouse today announced the full cast for its world premiere of *Black Cypress Bayou*, written by **Kristen Adele Calhoun** (HBO’s *Sula*, *BLKNWS*) and directed by **Tiffany Nichole Greene** (*Hamilton: An American Musical*, *Rent*).

The cast includes **Amber Chardae Robinson** (*Judas and the Black Messiah*, *80 for Brady*) as **Taysha Hunter**; **Brandee Evans** (*P-Valley*, *The Fabulous Four*) as **LadyBird “Lady” Manifold**; **Angela Lewis** (*Snowfall*, *Milk Like Sugar*) as **RaeMeka “Meka” Manifold-Baler**; and **Kimberly Scott** (*Joe Turner’s Come and Gone*, *Sweat*) as **Vernita Manifold**.

Previews for *Black Cypress Bayou* begin Wednesday, February 7, 2024, in the Audrey Skirball Kenis Theater at Geffen Playhouse. Opening night is Thursday, February 15, 2024.

On a hot summer night in Texas, Vernita Manifold summons her two daughters down to the bayou with a secret too big to keep. The richest, meanest man in town is dead, and the Manifold women know more than they’re saying. As secrets begin to surface, the bonds between the women, their town, and the legacy of their ancestors all come to a head. *Black Cypress Bayou* is a hilarious, suspenseful world premiere about loyalty, healing, and comeuppance.

Recipient of the Edgerton Foundation New Play Award. Major support for this world premiere production provided by the Edgerton Foundation New Play Production Fund. This production is made possible, in part, by support from Cast Iron Entertainment.

BLACK CYPRESS BAYOU

Written by **Kristen Adele Calhoun**

Directed by **Tiffany Nichole Greene**

Previews: February 7, 2024 – February 14, 2024

Opening Night: February 15, 2024

Closing Night: March 17, 2024

CAST

Amber Chardae Robinson as Taysha Hunter
Brandee Evans as LadyBird “Lady” Manifold
Angela Lewis as RaeMeka “Meka” Manifold-Baler
Kimberly Scott as Vernita Manifold

PRODUCTION TEAM

Scenic Designer **Lawrence E. Moten III**
Costume Designer **Mylette Nora**
Lighting Designer **Donny Jackson**
Sound Design & Music by **Everett Elton Bradman**
Associate Director **Velani Dibba**
Dramaturg **Lindsay A. Jenkins**
Casting Director **Phyllis Schuringa, CSA**

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

Monday, Tuesday	No performance
Wednesday – Friday	8:00 p.m.
Saturday	3:00 and 8:00 p.m.
Sunday	2:00 and 7:00 p.m.

LOCATION

Audrey Skirball Kenis Theater at Geffen Playhouse
10886 Le Conte Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90024

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets currently priced at \$30.00 - \$129.00. Available by phone at 310.208.2028 or online at www.geffenplayhouse.org. Fees may apply.

All Geffen Playhouse productions are intended for an adult audience; children under ten years of age will not be admitted.

Rush tickets for each day’s performance are made available to the general public one hour before showtime at the box office. \$35.00 General/\$15.00 Student.

COLLEGE AUDIENCES

Through a variety of events and other opportunities, Geffen Playhouse welcomes college students to experience the live storytelling presented on our stages. We are proud of our association with UCLA’s School of Theater, Film, and Television, and open our doors to all college students throughout Los Angeles. More information is available at www.geffenplayhouse.org/college.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Kristen Adele Calhoun (Playwright)

Kristen Adele Calhoun is a writer, actor, producer, and curator. Her playwrighting commissions include Penumbra Theatre, Lucille Lortel Theatre, the NAACP, St. Louis Black Repertory Company, 651 ARTS, and the Black American West Museum. Other plays include *WILDCAT*, *blood work*, *Out the Mud*, and *Canfield*

Drive. She is the co-curator of BLKSPACE, a two-week, rest-centered residency for Black artists and is currently an I AM SOUL Playwriting Resident at Dr. Barbara Ann Teer's National Black Theatre. Her film and television writing credits include: HBO's adaptation of Toni Morrison's novel *Sula* helmed by showrunner Shannon M. Houston and Stephanie Allain's Homegrown Pictures, and *BLKNWS* directed by Kahlil Joseph, produced by A24 and Participant. Kristen's television and film acting credits include: *House of Cards*, *Orange Is the New Black*, *Elementary*, *Blue Bloods*, *The Good Wife*, *Everything I Whispered to Dorothy*, and *The Astronaut Who Lost His Helmet*. A native of Dallas, Texas, she is a graduate of the University of North Texas (Bachelor of Fine Arts) and the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University (Master of Fine Arts). She splits her time between Ghana, Mexico, and the United States of America. Instagram: @kristenadelecalhoun

Tiffany Nichole Green (Director)

Tiffany Nichole Greene was the original resident director of *Hamilton: An American Musical* (Philip Tour). Her most recent work, York Walker's *Covenant*, is running in NYC at Roundabout Theatre Company until December 3rd. Recent directing credits include Jonathan Larson's *Rent* at Oregon Shakespeare Festival; Steph Del Rosso's *53% Of* at Second Stage Theater; Christina Ham's *Nina Simone: Four Women* at Arizona Theatre Company; the world premiere of Vichet Chum's *High School Play: A Nostalgia Fest* at the Alley Theatre; the world premiere of *Invincible* at The Wallis, featuring the music of Pat Benatar and Neil Giraldo; the world premiere of Deneen Reynolds-Knott's *Shoebus Picnic Road Side: Route One* at Alabama Shakespeare Festival; and Adrienne Kennedy's *Ohio State Murders* for the Goodman Theatre's LIVE series. During the pandemic, Tiffany directed the world premieres of Lydia R. Diamond's *whiterly negotiations* and Lynn Nottage's *What Are The Things I Need To Remember* for *Theatre For One: Here We Are*, produced by Octopus Theatricals (NYT Critic's Pick). She is a Lincoln Center Directors Lab alum, a Soho Rep Directors Lab alum, and a proud member of SDC. She holds an M.F.A. from Brown University/Trinity Rep. www.tiffanynicholegreene.com

Amber Chardae Robinson (Taysha Hunter)

Amber Chardae Robinson was born and raised in Port Arthur, Texas. Amber is a proud graduate of Prairie View A&M University (B.A. Theatre 2012) and Columbia University (M.F.A. Acting 2015). Recent film credits include: *Judas and the Black Messiah*, *Moving On*, *80 for Brady*, *So Help Me Todd*, *Loot*, *Stuber*, *Always a Bridesmaid*, *The Neighborhood*, *Hell On Wheels*. Additionally, Amber recently performed as "Virginia" in Apple TV+'s *Palm Royale* which is set to release in 2024. Theatre credits include: off-Broadway: *The Comedy of Errors*, *Light*, *Fen*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Classic Stage Company); regional: *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (California Shakespeare Company). Amber dedicates this performance in honor of her mother Chere Lynette Sanders. @amberchardae

Brandee Evans (LadyBird "Lady" Manifold)

Brandee Evans is an actress and caregiver. She appears as a lead on the Starz network show *P-Valley*, in the role of "Mercedes." Brandee received two NAACP Image Award nominations in the Outstanding Actress in a Drama Series category for her work on seasons one and two of *P-Valley*. She won the Women's Image Network Awards in 2021 for Outstanding Actress in a Drama Series. She will next be seen in the Bleeker Street comedy *The Fabulous Four* playing Sheryl Lee Ralph's daughter and starring in the independent feature film *Incision*. Brandee's first career was as an educator. She held the Chair position of the English department in Memphis, her hometown. Brandee is also an accomplished dancer and choreographer—she has appeared in multiple music videos and has toured, danced, and created for artists all over the world. She is a proud member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. IG: @TheRealBrandee www.BrandeeEvans.com

Angela Lewis (RaeMeka “Meka” Manifold-Baler)

Angela Lewis is a versatile actress known for her roles in off-Broadway productions and her acclaimed portrayal of “Aunt Louie” on the FX hit series *Snowfall*. She majored in theater at the University of Michigan. Angela’s on-camera career includes appearances on Showtime’s *The Big C*, *Law & Order: SVU*, TNT’s *The Last Ship*, and CBS’s *Code Black*, before landing *Snowfall*. Alongside her acting career, she co-founded BlüRemedi Media, a production company that illuminates the vast diversity within diversity, with her husband. In 2019, Angela became a mom, and this beautiful experience moved her to create Birth Village, a non-profit dedicated to eliminating the Black Maternal Health crisis by raising awareness, educating, and advocating for Black (and other marginalized) moms and their families. In 2023, she gave birth again and cemented her commitment to fostering joyful birthing experiences. You can follow Angela Lewis on social media: @luvangelalewis, @birthvillage_org, or visit her website www.luvangelalewis.com.

Kimberly Scott (Vernita Manifold)

Broadway: *Joe Turner’s Come and Gone* (Tony and Drama Desk Award nominations). Regional: *The XIXth* (world premiere at The Old Globe); *Sweat* (world premiere at Arena Stage); *Familiar* (world premiere at Yale Repertory Theatre); *Head of Passes* (Berkeley Repertory Theatre); *Her Portmanteau* (A.C.T. Strand Theatre); *American Night: The Ballad of Juan José* (Kirk Douglas Theatre); *Ruined* and *The Liquid Plain* (world premiere) (Oregon Shakespeare Festival); *A Raisin in the Sun* (The Huntington), *Death of a Salesman* (Yale Repertory Theatre); and *The Gospel at Colonus* (Mabou Mines/Moscow Gorky Art Theatre), among many others. TV recurring: *Bob Hearts Abishola*, *Medium*, *Family Law*, *The Commish*. Film: *Respect*, *The Abyss*, *Love & Other Drugs*, *Guess Who*, *K-PAX*, *I Am Sam*, *The Client*, *Batman Forever*, and *Batman & Robin*. M.F.A.: The David Geffen School of Drama at Yale. Two-time Beinecke Fellow at Yale Repertory Theatre and Board Member for the extraordinary environmental non-profit Mujeres de la Tierra (www.mujeresdelatierra.org).

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ABOUT GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE

Geffen Playhouse has been a hub of the Los Angeles theater scene since opening its doors in 1995. Noted for its intimacy and celebrated for its world-renowned mix of classic and contemporary plays, provocative new works and second productions, the not-for-profit organization continues to present a body of work that has garnered national recognition. Named in honor of entertainment mogul and philanthropist David Geffen, who made the initial donation to the theater, the company was founded by Gilbert Cates and is currently helmed by Executive Director Gil Cates, Jr., Artistic Director Tarell Alvin McCraney and Board Chair Adi Greenberg. Proudly associated with UCLA, the Geffen welcomes an audience of more than 130,000 each year, and maintains extensive education and community engagement programs, designed to involve underserved young people and the community at large in the arts. www.geffenplayhouse.org

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