

GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE

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FULL CAST ANNOUNCED FOR WEST COAST PREMIERE OF “FURLOUGH’S PARADISE” AT GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE

FEATURING KACIE ROGERS AND DeWANDA WISE

WRITTEN BY a.k. payne AND DIRECTED BY TINASHE KAJESE-BOLDEN

PREVIEWS BEGIN APRIL 16 - OPENING NIGHT IS APRIL 24

LOS ANGELES (February 25, 2025) – Geffen Playhouse today announced the full cast for its West Coast premiere of *Furlough’s Paradise*, written by **a.k. payne** (*Amani, Love I AWETHU Further*) and directed by **Tinashe Kajese-Bolden** (*School Girls; or, the African Mean Girls Play, Native Gardens*).

The cast includes **Kacie Rogers** (*Curb Your Enthusiasm, Grace & Frankie*) as Mina and **DeWanda Wise** (*She’s Gotta Have It, Jurassic World Dominion*) as Sade.

Previews for *Furlough’s Paradise* begin Wednesday April 16, 2025, in the Gil Cates Theater at Geffen Playhouse. Opening night is Thursday, April 24, 2025.

Cousins Sade and Mina used to be inseparable. Now leading very different lives, they return to their childhood town for the funeral of their mother and aunt. While Sade is on a three-day furlough from prison and Mina experiences a brief reprieve from her career and life on the West Coast, the two try to make sense of grief, home, love, and kinship. As the clock ticks down, the cousins grapple with their conflicting memories of the past and their shared hopes for the future. Poetic and theatrical, *Furlough’s Paradise* explores family dreams of a utopia yet to be realized.

This production is made possible, in part, by support from Cast Iron Entertainment and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Geffen Playhouse’s [Theater as a Lens for Justice](#) initiative provides access to this production and supplementary programs for populations impacted by incarceration and is supported, in part, by Jayne Baron Sherman.

Audience Engagement initiatives for *Furlough’s Paradise* are supported by The Sheri and Les Biller Family Foundation.

Geffen Playhouse is supported, in part, by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors through the Department of Arts and Culture, and as part of Creative Recovery LA, an initiative funded by the American Rescue Plan.

FURLOUGH'S PARADISE

Written by **a.k. payne**

Directed by **Tinashe Kajese-Bolden**

Previews: April 16, 2025 – April 23, 2025

Opening Night: April 24, 2025

Closing Night: May 18, 2025

CAST

Kacie Rogers as Mina

DeWanda Wise as Sade

PRODUCTION TEAM

Scenic Designer **Chika Shimizu**

Costume Designer **Celeste Jennings**

Lighting Designer **Pablo Santiago**

Sound Designer **Cricket S. Myers**

Projection Designer **Yee Eun Nam**

Choreographer **Dell Howlett**

Associate Director **Velani Dibba**

Production Stage Manager **Sam Allen**

Assistant Stage Manager **Alexus Jade Coney**

Casting Director **Phyllis Schuringa, CSA**

UNDERSTUDIES

m as u/s Sade

Naomi C. Walley as u/s Mina

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

Gil Cates Theater at Geffen Playhouse

10886 Le Conte Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90024

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets currently priced at \$36.00 - \$139.00. 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 10 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. \$40.00 General/\$20.00 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

a.k.payne (Playwright)

a.k. payne is a playwright, artist-theorist, and theatermaker with roots in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Their plays love on and engage the interdependencies of Black pasts, presents, and futures and seek to find/remember language that might move us towards our collective liberation(s). They hold a B.A. in English and African American Studies from Yale University and an M.F.A. in Playwriting under Tarell Alvin McCraney from fka Yale School of Drama. A 2023-2024 Van Lier New Voices Fellow, their work has been a finalist for the L. Arnold Weissberger New Play Award, and a 3x finalist for the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize, the largest international prize for women+ playwrights. Their work has been developed with the O'Neill National Playwrights Conference, The New Harmony Project, Great Plains Theater Commons New Play Conference, and Manhattan Theatre Club's Groundworks Lab. She is currently a resident artist/fellow with National Black Theatre's I Am SOUL Playwright Residency and Advancing Black Arts in Pittsburgh (The Pittsburgh Foundation). They are a proud graduate of Pittsburgh Public Schools; grandchild of the U.S. Great Migration; descendant of a music teacher and a carpenter, who both march every year with their unions in Pittsburgh's Labor Day parade; an nb & genderqueer abolitionist affected in community by the "New Jim Crow;" and of a great lineage of Black women storytellers and living-room archivists; all of which deeply informs, uplifts, and amplifies their work as a playwright, community organizer, and spacemaker.

Tinashe Kajese-Bolden (Director)

Tinashe Kajese-Bolden is a multi-award-winning artistic leader, director, and actor whose work lives at the intersection of artistic innovation, complicated human stories, and community empowerment. She is the Artistic Director of the Alliance Theatre in Atlanta, a Zelda Fichandler Award finalist, a Princess Grace Award recipient for Directing, and a MAP Fund grantee for *All Smiles*, a devised work centering children on the autism spectrum. Her directing credits include world premieres of the modern opera *Forsyth County is Flooding (with the Joy of Lake Lanier)* (Adamma Ebo and Marcus Norris); *The Preacher's Wife* musical (Tituss Burgess); *Furlough's Paradise* (a.k. payne); *Ghost* (Idris Goodwin); and *Nick's Flamingo Grill* at the Alliance. She has directed regionally at Milwaukee Rep, Kenny Leon's True Colors Theatre, Virginia Stage Company, and more, with Broadway and Off-Broadway credits spanning the Imperial Theatre, Primary Stages, and The Classical Theatre of Harlem. On screen, she has appeared in *The Suicide Squad*, *Marvel's Hawkeye*, Ava DuVernay's *Cherish the Day*, *Dynasty*, and *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, among others. Driven by a passion for connection, her work explores how art can liberate us to imagine a more inclusive future. For my loves—Keith, Kingston, and Kingsley.

Kacie Rogers (Mina)

Two-time NAACP Award-winning actor and writer Kacie Rogers received her classical training at AMDA College and Conservatory of the Performing Arts. She is the face of the board game *Disparity Trap* and has appeared on hit TV shows like *Curb Your Enthusiasm* and *Grace & Frankie*. Kacie has performed with prestigious Los Angeles theatres, including The Robey Theatre Company, the Getty Villa, A Noise Within,

IAMA Theatre Company, Greenway Court Theatre, Skylight Theatre Company, and Geffen Playhouse. In 2021, she earned a writing fellowship that led to her acclaimed one-woman show, *I Sell Windows*, with successful runs in New York, Los Angeles, and Edinburgh Festival Fringe. Kacie is deeply grateful to God, her friends, family, and her agent/manager team for their unwavering support in her journey, and she's honored to share her work with audiences everywhere.

DeWanda Wise (Sade)

DeWanda Wise is a critically acclaimed actor and filmmaker. Recent credits include the Sundance hit *Love, Brooklyn*, *Three Women* on Starz, the Blumhouse horror film *Imaginary*, and Chris Pine's directorial debut *Poolman*. Previous credits include *Jurassic World Dominion*, *The Harder They Fall*, the breakout role of "Nola Darling" in the Netflix adaption of *She's Gotta Have It*, the hit comedy *Someone Great*, and the Sony/Netflix film *Fatherhood*, among others. Select stage credits include Atlantic Theater Company's *Fireflies*; originating the roles of "Nina" in Dominique Morisseau's *Sunset Baby*, and "Mercy" in *Flight*, directed by Liesl Tommy; David Mamet's *Race* at the Kirk Douglas Theatre, and *In the Continuum*. An Ambassador for NAMI, DeWanda is committed to reducing mental health stigma and systemic change towards accessible care for all.

OPENING NIGHT HOSPITALITY SPONSOR

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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/CEO 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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