



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 14, 2017

CONTACT: Lesley Green, Lesley@kitchentheatre.org / (607) 272-0403

PUBLICITY AND ARTIST PHOTOS: huntingontheatre.org/news/photo-library (see instructions below)

OPENING: Thursday, September 8, 7:30pm. RSVP to lesley@kitchentheatre.org

KITCHEN THEATRE COMPANY INTRODUCES ITHACA AUDIENCES TO LYDIA R. DIAMOND'S WORK WITH PROVOCATIVE NEW COMEDY "SMART PEOPLE"

PRODUCTION MARKS FIRST UNDER NEW LEADERSHIP OF PRODUCING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR M. BEVIN O'GARA PREVIEWS BEGINS SEPTEMBER 3RD

(ITHACA) – Kitchen Theatre Company launches its 2017-2018 Season with *Smart People*, a sharp and provocative new comedy by Lydia R. Diamond. Summer L. Williams, Associate Artistic Director of Company One Theatre (Boston, MA), directs. Performances of *Smart People* begin at the Kitchen Theatre Company in The Percy Browning Theatre on September 3.

"I couldn't be more excited for Lydia R. Diamond's *Smart People* to be the first show of my first season here at the Kitchen Theatre Company," says Producing Artistic Director, Bevin. "*Smart People* is about big, controversial ideas that are so important to this particular moment. And yet it is also a story about compelling and dynamic human relationships. When I think of Lydia's plays, the first thing that comes to mind are the unique characters she creates and the complex relationships she builds between them. But what I love most about her writing is the way she infuses humor and heart to really drive the story home."

Smart People poses big questions about whether our beliefs and prejudices are hard-wired into us by exploring the intersecting lives of four Harvard intellectuals: Brian, a white neuro-psychiatrist studying the brain's response to race; his Chinese-Japanese American lover Ginny, a tenured professor of psychology studying race and identity among Asian-American women; Brian's friend Jackson, an African-American surgical intern on rotation in one of the university's teaching hospitals; and Valerie, an African-American who has recently graduated with her MFA in Acting. With barbed wit, Diamond asks questions about our beliefs and prejudices as she depicts these four characters search for love, success, and identify in a complex world.

"I am so excited to be back in the room working on another Lydia Diamond play," says director Williams. "She is so tremendously gifted, and her work is always challenging, humorous, and piercing. It's been one of the great joys of my life to know her; she's a sister and artist whom I fully admire. The

opportunity to be reunited in Ithaca is thrilling. I'm honored to be at the helm of this project, working with both old friends and new, telling this incredibly profound and funny story."

The ensemble cast features Bryce Michael Wood (*King Lear* and *Spamalot* at Connecticut Repertory Theatre) as Jackson, Folami Williams (*Othello* at Classic Stage Company and *Concrete Orange* at the Guthrie Theater) as Valerie, Jake Lee Smith (*Buried Child* and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* at NYU) as Brian, and Shannon Tyo (*Kentucky* at Ensemble Studio Theatre and *The White Snake* at The Old Globe) as Ginny.

Smart People was commissioned by McCarter Theatre Center and originally produced at the Huntington Theatre Company supported by the National Endowment for the Arts Art Works grant.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

LYDIA R. DIAMOND (Playwright) Award winning plays include: *Smart People*, *Stick Fly*, *Voyeurs de Venus*, *The Bluest Eye*, *The Gift Horse*, *Harriet Jacobs*, *The Inside*, and *Stage Black*. Theatres include: Arena Stage, Cort Theatre (Broadway), Chicago Dramatists, Company One, Congo Square, Goodman, Hartford Stage, Huntington, Jubilee, Kansas City Rep, Long Wharf, Lorraine Hansberry, McCarter, Mo'Olelo, MPAACT, New Vic, Playmakers Rep, Plowshares, Second Stage, Steppenwolf, and TrueColors. Commissions include: Arena Stage, Steppenwolf (4), McCarter, Huntington, Center Stage, Victory Gardens, and The Roundabout. A recipient of many playwriting awards, Lydia was also an '05/'06 W.E.B. Du Bois Institute non-resident Fellow, a 2007 TCG/NEA Playwright in Residence at Steppenwolf, an 06/07 Huntington Playwright Fellow, a 2012 Sundance Institute Playwright Lab Creative Advisor, is a Board Member at Chicago Dramatists, and a 2012/2013 Radcliffe Institute Fellow. Lydia is an NU graduate ('91), has an Honorary Doctorate of Arts from Pine Manor College, and is 2013-14 Playwright in Residence at Arena Stage.

Summer L. Williams (Director) Ms. Williams is a Co-Founder and Associate Artistic Director of Company One Theatre in Boston. Her most recent directing credits include: *Barbecue* at Lyric Stage Company of Boston, *Revolt. She Said. Revolt Again.* at Company One Theatre, *Bootycandy* at SpeakEasy Stage Company, *An Octoroon* and *Colossal* with Company One Theatre--Winner of the 2016 Elliot Norton Award for Outstanding Director for both productions. Regional credits: *Intimate Apparel* at Lyric Stage Company of Boston, *Shiv* as a part of *The Displaced Hindu Gods Trilogy*, *Shelter of Last Resort* by Miranda Craigwell as a part of XX PlayLab 2014, and the New England Premiere of Jackie Sibblies Drury's *We Are Proud To Present A Presentation About The Herero Of Namibia, Formerly Known As Southwest Africa From The German Sudwestafrika Between The Years 1884-1915*, Idris Goodwin's *How We Got On* and Lynn Nottage's *By The Way, Meet Vera Stark* at the Lyric Stage Company of Boston, *The Brothers Size* and *Marcus; Or The Secret Of Sweet* as part of *The Brother/Sister Plays* (2012 Elliot Norton Award nominated for Outstanding Production and winner of the 2012 IRNE Award for Best Play), *Neighbors*, *Grimm*, *The Good Negro*, *Voyeurs De Venus* (Winner of 2009 Elliot Norton Award for Outstanding Director), *The Bluest Eye* (IRNE and Elliot Norton Award nominated), *The Last Days Of Judas Iscariot*, *Spell #7* (IRNE nominated), *Jesus Hopped The A Train* (2004 Elliot Norton Award for Best Fringe Production) *Twilight: Los Angeles 1992* (IRNE nominated). Ms. Williams has also directed for the Boston Playwrights' Theatre, Clark University, Brandeis University, The Theatre Offensive and Huntington Theatre Company.

The Kitchen Theatre Company's production of *Smart People* will feature scenic and lighting design by Tyler M. Perry (*Clean Alternatives* and *Throw Pitchfork* at the Kitchen), costume design by Lisa Boquist (*Birds of East Africa* and *Precious Nonsense* at the Kitchen), and projection and sound design by Rasean Davonte Johnson (*Cymbeline* at Yale Repertory Theatre and *You Got Older* at Steppenwolf Theatre). Production Stage Manager is Jennifer Schlansky.

SPONSORS

- Co-Producer: C.S.P Management
- Media Sponsor: Cayuga Radio Group

ABOUT THE KITCHEN THEATRE COMPANY

Bold, intimate, engaging... Kitchen Theatre Company (KTC), now beginning its 27th season, is downtown Ithaca's critically acclaimed and nationally recognized year-round professional theater company, specializing in regional and world premiere plays. KTC's intimate 99-seat theater is in a beautifully renovated, LEED-certified building in the West End neighborhood of downtown Ithaca, New York. KTC is the first not-for-profit recipient of the David R. Strong Memorial "Small Business of the Year" Award from the Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce and receives public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, a State Agency, and the Tompkins County Tourism Program. The Kitchen Theatre Company also receives general operating support from the Shubert Foundation.

#

PHOTO DOWNLOAD INSTRUCTIONS

1. Visit <https://www.flickr.com/groups/kitchentheatrecompany/>
2. Click on the thumbnail and let the image load in your browser on the Flickr site.
3. Click the "... " button in the lower right-hand corner of the window and select View All Sizes.
4. Select the size you wish to download from the choices listed across the top of the image.
5. Click the "Download the ___ size of this photo..." link at the top. The image will download to your computer.

PRODUCTION INFORMATION AND CALENDAR

WHEN

September 3– September 22, 2017

Tuesday preview performance at 7:00 PM

Wednesday & Thursday evening performances at 7:30 PM

Friday & Saturday evenings at 8:00 PM

Sunday matinee performances at 4:00 PM

Thursday matinee performance at 2:00 PM

Opening: Thursday, September 7, 7:30pm. RSVP to Lesley Greene at lesley@kitchentheatre.org

Special Media Invite Event: Thursday, September 14 at 6:30 PM to meet new Producing Artistic Director, M. Bevin O'Gara. RSVP to Lesley Greene at lesley@kitchentheatre.org

WHERE

Kitchen Theatre Company

417 W. State/MLK, Jr. St. Ithaca, NY 14850

HOW













Subscriptions Available from \$108 to \$284.

Single Tickets Available from \$15 to \$45.

- Online at kitchentheatre.org/tickets.html
- By phone at (607) 272-0570

- In person Monday-Friday, 10:00 AM-6:00 PM at the Kitchen offices (409 W. State St.) and Saturday-Sunday, 12:00-4:00 PM at the theater (417 W. State St.)

SEPTEMBER 3-SEPTEMBER 24

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|--|---|---|---|---|--|--------------|
|  3 4:00pm | 4 |  5 7:00pm |  6 7:30pm |  7 7:30pm |  8 8:00pm | 9 8:00pm |
| 10 4:00pm | 11 | 12 | 13 7:30pm | 14 2pm / 7:30pm |  15 8:00pm | 16 8:00pm |
|  17 4:00pm | 18 | 19 | 20 7:30pm | 21 7:30pm | 22 8:00pm | 23 8:00pm |
| 24 4:00pm |  PREVIEW  OPENING  ACTORS' FORUM  PAY WHAT YOU CAN  POST-SHOW TALK | | | | | |



CO-PRODUCER



MEDIA SPONSOR

Pay What You Can Nights: Sunday, September 3rd and Tuesday, September 5th.

Preview Talkbacks: Led by members of the Kitchen Theatre staff after Preview performances. Free with a ticket to the performance.

Actors' Forum: Participating cast members answer questions from the audience. Hosted by Lee Rayburn of WHCU. September 8th & 15th following the 8PM performances.

Post Show Talk: A conversation about the historic or literary context of the production. Sunday, September 17th, following the 4 PM performance.