

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



**ACT CONTEMPORARY THEATRE ANNOUNCES CAST
AND CREATIVE TEAM FOR THE SEATTLE PREMIERE OF
ZORA HOWARD'S**

STEW

**3 generations of black women wrestle with loss and hope
in this hilarious, haunting drama**

*Directed by ACT Core Company Member Claudine Mboligikpelani
Nako and playing in ACT's Falls Theatre, March 15 – 31. Single
tickets on sale now at acttheatre.org.*



SEATTLE, WA (February 15, 2024) — ACT Contemporary Theatre announced the cast and creative team for the Seattle premiere of **STEW** by **Zora Howard**, starting March 15 for a limited run. The lively, fast-paced **STEW** is directed by ACT Core Company Member **Claudine Mboligikpelani Nako** and features the acting talents of **Shaunyce Omar**, **Shermona Mitchell**, **Varinique Davis**, and **Kataka Corn**.

Set over the course of a single day in the kitchen of the family household, *STEW* tells the story of three generations of Tucker women. Mama's up early to prepare the perfect stew for a very important community meal. As the day rolls on, tempers go from a simmer to a boil, and secrets rise to the surface in this hilarious and haunting drama.

A 2021 Pulitzer Prize Finalist, *STEW* has been called "a captivating story that's intimate, funny, and heartbreaking in equal measure" (New Yorker; 2020) and "a play infused with a savory flavor that is as personal as it is universal." (TheaterMania)

"I am so excited to work with this outstanding ensemble of artists to share this beautiful play with the Seattle community," said Director Claudine Mboligkpelani Nako. "*STEW* is a feast for the senses. I hope you'll join us at this table and leave much fuller than when you arrived."

ACT Artistic Director John Langs said, "I loved this play for ACT for its humor, poetry and slyness of the writing. The script, with all its twists and turns, is an invitation for bold performance and we are thrilled to have another powerhouse cast taking the stage. They are led by the vision of our multi talented Core Company member and director Claudine Mboligkpelani Nako. Set in a kitchen you will want to call home, the play presents a meal for everyone to savor."

STEW begins March 15, with an opening night celebration on Thursday, March 21. The festivities include a pre-show party in collaboration with [Northwest Folklife](#), with entertainment from a vocal trio led by **Lady Mercedes & Friends**. Other special events throughout the run include Tix for Teachers, Community Day, an ASL performance, and an audio-described performance. A full list of events can be found below and at [ACTtheatre.org](#).

Zora Howard's *STEW* plays in ACT's Falls Theatre March 15-31. Tickets and discounted tickets for groups of 10+ are available now at [ACTtheatre.org](#) or by calling the ACT Box Office at (206) 292-7676.

MEET THE CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

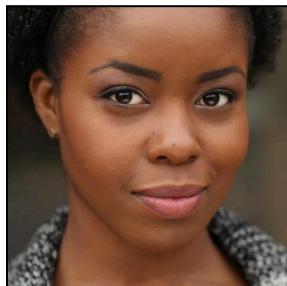


The intimate, four-person cast of **STEW** features **Shaunyce Omar** (Village Theatre: *Chicago*) as Mama; **Shermona Mitchell** (ACT: *The Crucible*) as Lillian; **Varinique Davis** (Intiman Theatre: *The Niceties*) as Nelly; and **Kataka Corn** (5th Avenue Theatre: *The Wiz*) as Lil' Mama.

Lexi Warden (Macha Theatre Works: *The Flight Before Xmas*) is an understudy for Lil' Mama.

The entirely local creative team includes **Claudine Mboligikpelani Nako** (Director); **Parmida Ziaei** (Scenic Designer); **Danielle Nieves** (Costume Designer); **Connie Yun** (Lighting Designer & ACT Core Company Member); **Erin Bednarz** (Sound Designer); **Jasmine Lomax** (Intimacy Consultant); and **Quetzle Taborga** (Casting Director).

ABOUT CLAUDINE MBOLIGIKPELANI NAKO (Director)



Claudine Mboligikpelani Nako (she/her) is a multifaceted artist whose work includes directing, teaching, performing, and collaborating with innovators who spark her curiosity. Nako is the writer and composer of the new musical *Photosynthesis* (www.photosynthesismusical.com) which was developed at the 2023 JMF Writers Grove at Goodspeed Musicals and featured in Goodspeed's 2024 Festival of New Musicals. Regional associate directing credits include *Sweat* (ACT); *Songs for a New World*, *Mamma Mia!* (Village). Stage credits include *The Crucible*,

A Christmas Carol, Dracula, Mr. Burns: A Post-Electric Play (ACT); As You Like It, A Raisin in the Sun (Seattle Rep); Little Bee (Book-It); Red Riding Hood, Snow White (SCT); My Heart is the Drum, Big River (Village); A Bright Room Called Day (The Williams Project). Film/TV credits include *Raising Dion, Outside In, Everything Sucks!* (Netflix); *Three Busy Debras* (Max); *Grimm* (NBC). Nako is a proud member of AEA, SAG-AFTRA, and the Dramatists Guild of America.

ABOUT ZORA HOWARD (Playwright)



Zora Howard (Playwright) is a Harlem-bred writer and performer. Plays include *STEW* (2021 Pulitzer Prize Finalist; Page 73 Productions); *THE MASTER'S TOOLS* (Williamstown Theatre Festival); *BUST* (2022 Susan Smith Blackburn Prize Finalist; 2022 L. Arnold Weissberger New Play Award Finalist); *HANG TIME* (2022 Creative Capital Award Finalist); and *GOOD FAITH*. Her work has been developed at Ojai Playwrights Conference, SPACE at Ryder Farm, The Lark, Primary Stages, and Cape Cod Theatre Project, among others. In 2020, her film *Premature* (2020 Film Independent John Cassavetes Award nominee), which she co-wrote with director Rashaad Ernesto Green, opened in theaters following its world premiere at the 2019 Sundance Film Festival. Zora is the inaugural Judith Champion Fellow at MTC, a 2022 Lilly Award and Helen Merrill Award recipient and is currently under commission from Seattle Rep, MTC, and Wessex Grove.

FOR EDITORS/PRODUCERS:

WHAT:

STEW

By Zora Howard

Directed by Claudine Mboligikpelani Nako

Mama's up early to prepare the perfect stew for a very important community meal. As the day rolls on, tempers go from a simmer to a boil, and secrets rise to the surface for three generations of Tucker women. When the violence hovering around the periphery of their lives begins to intrude upon the sanctity of the kitchen, mothers and daughters wrestle with loss and hope in this hilarious, haunting drama.

[Show Details >>](#)

[Ticket info >>](#)

WHEN:

March 15 – 31, 2024

Evening performance times are 7:30 p.m. and matinees are 2 p.m. A full performance schedule can be [found here](#).

Run time is approximately 90 minutes with no intermission.

Key Dates:

- **First Performance:** Friday, March 15 at 7:30 p.m.
- **Opening Night:** Thursday, March 21 at 7:30 p.m.
 - Join us free before the show at 6:30 for our Opening Night celebration featuring music, photos, and fun. ACT Contemporary Theatre celebrates opening night, in collaboration with Northwest Folklife, with preshow entertainment from a vocal trio led by Lady Mercedes & Friends. [Get opening night tickets here >>](#)
- **Tix for Teachers:** Saturday, March 16 at 7:30 p.m.
 - ACT offers K-12 educators free tickets to Tix for Teachers night. Join Artistic Associate Shana Bestock before the show for a casual reception and information about ACT's educational programs. [Get Tix for Teachers tickets here >>](#)
- **ASL (American Sign Language) Interpreted Performance:** Saturday, March 30 at 2:00 p.m.
 - Special seating is reserved for patrons requesting live ASL interpretation of the spoken English performance. Seats are held for patrons during select performances to guarantee optimal viewing of both the interpreters and the stage. [Get ASL tickets here >>](#)
- **Audio-Described Performance:** Saturday, March 30 at 2:00 p.m.
 - Complimentary audio description is available for patrons who are blind, who have low vision, or who may benefit from having the unspoken action of a play narrated for any reason. See any front-of-house team member before the performance to receive your headset. [Get audio-described tickets here >>](#)

WHERE:

ACT Contemporary Theatre's Falls Theatre, located at 700 Union Street in Downtown Seattle.

TICKETS:

Tickets start with Pay What You Choose to select performances. We are proud to offer a range of ticket prices for all our plays in our goal to make theatre affordable for everyone.

To purchase tickets, visit <https://acttheatre.org>

PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO

For available pre-production images and headshots, [please visit our Press Room online >>](#)

CONNECT ON SOCIAL:

acttheatre.org

Facebook - [/ACTtheatre](#)

Instagram - [@ACTtheatre](#)

TikTok - [@actseattle](#)

LinkedIn - [/act-theatre](#)

Show tags: #ACTtheatre #ACTSeattle #STEWinSeattle

ABOUT ACT CONTEMPORARY THEATRE

Steadfast in its dedication to producing work that sparks an authentic curiosity about the human condition, ACT produces bold, audacious works of contemporary theatre from its home in Seattle. Over the last 58 years, ACT remains the voice of contemporary theatre in the Pacific Northwest, presenting necessary and relevant works on current themes and producing more than 300 plays and musicals, including 47 world premieres. Led by Artistic Director John Langs, ACT nurtures theatre-makers of the next generation, with a mission to be a contemporary theatre where artistic ambition and civic engagement unite.

ACT is here to challenge how stories are told. For more information on ACT Contemporary Theatre please visit ACTTheatre.org.

Thank you to ACT Contemporary Theatre's Theatre and Season Sponsors: 4Culture, ArtsFund, Seattle Office of Arts & Culture, The Shubert Foundation, Nesholm Family Foundation, ArtsWA, Bowery Valuation, The Grousemont Foundation, NBBJ, The Sunderland Foundation, and Katharyn Alvord Gerlich.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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