



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**TOWN HALL THEATRE ANNOUNCES THE FINAL MAIN STAGE PRODUCTION IN
THE 2022-2023 SEASON**

April 7th, 2023 – Town Hall Theatre presents Lynn Nottage's *Crumbs from the Table of Joy*, a story of family, womanhood, and growing up amidst the social and political changes of the 1950's. When Ernestine's mother dies, she moves with her father and sister from Pensacola, Florida to Brooklyn, New York. There, she faces the many possibilities of her future that were no more than dreams back in Florida, and she discovers what type of life she wants to live.

Crumbs is a memory play told through Ernestine, a seventeen year old, African American young woman whose family is dealing with their own realities of change. Reeling off of the loss of his wife, Godfrey Crump, Ernestine's father, is left with the sole responsibility of raising his two maturing daughters.

"*Crumbs from the Table of Joy* is a feminist play. It is a story about women and how they combat the institutions and cultural impositions thrust upon them." shared director **Tanika Baptiste**. "These women represent the various archetypes both celebrated and rejected by America. Nottage is telling us to be nuanced in our understanding of others through these four women as we are complicated and make choices for survival. Women especially must live in and follow their passions. We must not allow our choices to be made at the discretion of others. A thriving society is one where women have shown up to discuss what is going on. As Gloria Steinem said "Women must have seats at the table because peace is too crucial to be left only to the politicians or only to the male half of our world." To that I add Yes, and if that table is serving crumbs we must be strong enough to get up, build our own, and feast."

"I'm so excited that *Crumbs* is being brought to our stage. Nottage has written specific, heartfelt, and grounded characters whose stories will be both a joy to watch and a joy to think about," says Town Hall's Interim of Artistic Programming **Jasmine Lew**. "Tanika's emphasis on the complexity of the characters in the play is a throughline theme for our season, and something I think audiences will really respond to. I encourage audiences to watch and consider: Where do you see yourselves in these stories, these characters? Where *don't* you see yourselves? When are you surprised? How might that help you think about the people around you a bit more complexly?"

Town Hall will hold talkbacks, facilitated by Director Tanika Baptiste and Dramaturg Kimberly Harvey-Scott, following the June 9th and June 23rd performances.

COVID PRECAUTIONS

MASKS ARE NO LONGER REQUIRED AND ARE NOW OPTIONAL

PROOF OF VACCINATION IS NO LONGER REQUIRED

To view our COVID 19 Policy in detail, please visit our website at <https://www.townhalltheatre.com/covid19>.

TESTING THEATRE ARTISTS

Testing protocols will be adjusted to meet the comfort of casts and availability of testing. Each cast and production team will be asked what testing protocols they are comfortable with. We pledge to establish and adhere to the protocols for each production that offer the most comfort to performers.

- A limited amount of rapid tests may be provided by Town Hall Theatre if they feel it is prudent and appropriate.
- If it is agreed to in advance Town Hall Theatre will reimburse anyone working on a project at Town Hall for the cost of purchasing a PCR or rapid test.

CONTENT ADVISORY FOR THIS PRODUCTION

This show contains Adult Language as well as themes portraying Systemic Racism, Sexism, Alcohol Abuse and Mental Health Decline.

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

Lynn Nottage, born November 2nd 1964, is an American playwright whose work often focuses on the experience of working-class people, particularly working-class people who are Black. She has received the Pulitzer Prize for Drama twice: in 2009 for her play *Ruined*, and in 2017 for her play *Sweat*. She was the first (and remains the only) woman to have won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama two times

Nottage is the recipient of a MacArthur "Genius" Fellowship and was included in *Time* magazine's 2019 list of the 100 Most Influential People. She is currently an associate professor of playwriting at Columbia University and an artist-in-residence at the Park Avenue Armory.

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Tanika Baptiste (she/they) works full time as a director, actor, vocalist and costume designer in the Bay Area, San Diego and sometimes NY. Past directorial regional credits include: *Giraffes Can't Dance* (Bay Area Children's Theatre) *The Piano Lesson* (Sankofa Theatre) *Playground SF*, *Bull in a China Shop*, *Collective Rage: A Play in 5 Betty's* (Pear Theatre) *How Black Mothers Say I Love You*, *At the Wake of a Dead Drag Queen* (Theatre Rhinoceros) Assistant Director, *Fight Captain* and *ASM Pass Over* (Marin Theatre Company) Tanika was most recently awarded Theatre Bay Area's Arts Leadership Cohort Grant with Theatre Rhinoceros and is 3x SFBATCC nominee for direction, choreography & costume design. Thank you Town Hall Theatre, cast and crew for this magnificent collaboration. Love to my family and friends.

ABOUT TOWN HALL THEATRE

Established in 1944 as the Dramateurs, Town Hall Theatre Company is the oldest continuously active theatre in Contra Costa County. Town Hall Theatre (THT) was awarded Best Theatre Troupe 2016 by Diablo Magazine, Best of The East Bay, and is the past recipient of numerous Shellie Awards, and Theatre Bay Area Awards. THT is also home to an extensive children's educational program, twice voted the Best Children's Theatre Company by Bay Area Parent Magazine. THT's home is the historic Town Hall Theatre building located at 3535 School Street in Lafayette which is owned by the Lafayette Improvement Association (LIA).

CALENDAR Information for "Crumbs from the Table of Joy"

WHO: Town Hall Theatre Company

WHAT: "Crumbs from the Table of Joy" Written by Lynn Nottage
Directed by Tanika Baptiste

CAST: Sundiata Ayinde, Asia Jackson, Keldamuzik, Keith White and Emily Keyishian

DATES: June 3rd-24th, 2023

WHERE: Town Hall Theatre

TICKETS: \$25-40, Pay-What-You-Can tickets will be available at all performances at the door.