

Crowded Fire Theater

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CROWDED FIRE THEATER'S 2015 SEASON
CONTINUES WITH
THE WEST COAST PREMIERE
BLACKADEMICS
by Idris Goodwin

DIRECTED BY CFT'S NEW ARTISTIC DIRECTOR MINA MORITA

April 9-May 2 (Press Opening April 13)
Thick House
1695 18th St, San Francisco

San Francisco - Crowded Fire Theater (CFT) presents the West Coast Premiere of **Blackademics** by Idris Goodwin, opening Monday April 13 (previews April 9-11) running through May 2 at the Thick House in San Francisco's Potrero Hill. Directed by CFT's new Artistic Director Mina Morita, *Blackademics* continues the company's long tradition of producing theater that is intellectually and emotionally challenging. In this funny and forthright production, playwright Idris Goodwin serves up a meal of searing wit, pop-culture humor, and psychological menace in an absurdist take on "post-racial America." "After years of appreciating the edgy and thought-provoking stories that Crowded Fire has brought to the stage, I am thrilled to be a part of the team! I can't think of a better way to start my journey at CFT, than tackling this fierce comedy about fighting for a seat at the cultural table..." remarks director Mina Morita.

In **Blackademics** two ravenous African-American scholars arrive for their coveted dinner reservation at a select café. But what starts as a celebration, quickly takes a raucous turn. Banter turns to debate, and debate into battle as the women figuratively and literally vie for a seat at the table. "Using the metaphor of having to fight for every item at the dinner table, from a glass of water, to a fork, to a chair, this play offers a scathing and sometimes hilarious journey of reckoning..." states outgoing Artistic Director Marissa Wolf. Chicago critics hailed the world premiere of *Blackademics* as "80 minutes of verbal and mental gymnastics...provocative...hilarious" and "timely." Underneath the smart conversations that the two lead characters share about race and politics inside of academia, Idris Goodwin offers a deeply complicated, haunting portrait of race and power in America.

New play development programming in Crowded Fire's 2015 Season is funded by generous support from the San Francisco Foundation and the San Francisco Arts Commission. Crowded Fire gratefully acknowledges general operations funding from Grants for the Arts/SF Hotel Tax Fund and The Kenneth Rainin Foundation

Idris Goodwin (playwright) is an award winning playwright, essayist, and spoken word artist. His *How We Got On*, developed at The Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, premiered at Actors Theatre of Louisville's 2012 Humana Festival. Nominated for an ATCA Steinberg New Play Award and published by Playscripts, *How We Got On* continues to enjoy remounts across the country. Other plays include

This Is Modern Art (co-written with Kevin Coval for Steppenwolf Theater) *And In This Corner: Cassius Clay* (StageOne Family Theater.) His upcoming *Bars And Measures* will world premiere at B Street Theater in Summer 2015. His play *The Realness* was featured in The Araca Group's New Play Reading Series with American Theatre Company and The Ruth Easton Series with Playwright's Center. He is the recipient of InterAct Theater's 20/20 Commission Award. Goodwin has been a writer in residence at Berkeley Rep's Ground Floor Program, The Kennedy Center and New Harmony Project. Goodwin is a Core Writer with The Playwrights' Center. An accomplished poet and essayist, his book *These Are The Breaks* was nominated for a Pushcart Prize. He's performed on HBO, Discovery and Sesame Street.

Mina Morita (director) is the outgoing Artistic Associate at Berkeley Rep and its center for creation and development of new work, The Ground Floor. During her time at Berkeley Rep, Mina has artistically coordinated the Fireworks Festival, directed *Crazy Wisdom Saves the World Again*, and directed a staged reading of *The Laramie Project: 10 Years Later*. As assistant director there, she has worked with Tony Taccone and Les Waters. In 2012, Mina worked with Anna Deavere Smith as the artistic coordinator for her play, *On Grace*. As a freelance director, she has worked at Shotgun Players, Just Theatre, TheatreFIRST, Sleepwalkers Theatre, Aurora Theatre Company's Global Age Project, Playwrights' Foundation, Impact Theatre, Berkeley Playhouse, and Bay Area Children's Theatre, among others. Christopher Chen's *Aulis: An Act of Nihilism in One Long Act* will be her inaugural project with UC Berkeley at the Zellerbach Playhouse. Mina also serves as the Board President for Shotgun Players, is one of the original founders of BACT, and recently joined Ferocious Lotus, a new Asian-American theatre company as one of its core company members. Mina holds a degree in directing from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, was awarded the Bret C. Harte Fellowship at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, received the National Arts Strategies Future Leadership Fellowship, and participated as a member of the 2014 Lincoln Center Director's Lab.

CAST:

Safiya Fredericks (actor portraying Ann) recently appeared in SF Playhouse's production of *Into the Woods*; TheaterWorks *Once On This Island*; 42nd St. Moon's *It's a Bird...It's a Plane... It's Superman!*; African-American Shakespeare Company's *The Merry Wives of Windsor*; San Jose Repertory Theatre's *Antigone* (Antigone); and *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson* at SF Playhouse. While living in New York, she was featured in The Civilians' *In the Footprint*; The Gallery Players' *Mrs. Bob Cratchit's Wild Christmas Binge*; and Irving Street Rep's touring production of *Smokey Joe's Cafe*. She has a BA in Theatre from UC Irvine and studied at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA).

Michele Priña Leavy (actor portraying Georgia) is a Resident Artist with Crowded Fire Theater (*Top Girls, A-A-America!, Big Death & Little Death, Forever Never Comes, Sticky Time, The Bereaved, The Late Wedding*). An actor, dancer, and choreographer, her Bay Area theater credits include: American Conservatory Theater, Alameda Civic Ballet, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Bay Area Playwrights Festival 2014, BrickaBrack Prods., Center Repertory Company, California Conservatory Theater, Livermore Shakespeare Festival, Marin Theatre Company, and TheaterWorks, among others. In farther locales, she has appeared with Theatre Key West (Florida), The Elephant Theatre Company (Los Angeles), and Theatre 167 (New York City). Michele is a teaching artist with various colleges, universities, and conservatory programs around the bay and beyond. She serves on Crowded Fire Theater's Literary Committee. She is also a member of the BALTAN – the Bay Area Latino Theater Artists Network.

Lauren Spencer (actor portraying Rachelle) is delighted to return to Crowded Fire after performing in *The Late Wedding* last fall. Other recent credits include: *Party People* (u/s Berkeley Rep), *A*

Maze (Just Theater), *Troilus and Cressida* (Impact Theater), *GOOD GOODS* (Crowded Fire Theater Co.), and *Our Practical Heaven* (Aurora Theater Co.). She is proud to have also worked with Magic Theater, Cutting Ball, Playwright's Foundation, Boxcar Theater, Playground, Townhall Theater Co., and the African American Shakespeare Company. laurenspencer.weebly.com

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Calendar Editors Please Note:

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CROWDED FIRE THEATER COMPANY 2015 SEASON

February 26 - October 24

ELECTRIFYING PLAYS BY

A. REY PAMATMAT, IDRIS GOODWIN AND LACHLAN PHILPOTT

AT THICK HOUSE IN SAN FRANCISCO

***Blackademics* West Coast Premiere**

April 9-May 2 (April 13 – opening)

By Idris Goodwin Directed by Mina Morita

NOTE CHANGE:

***Truck Stop* American Premiere October 1-24 (October 5 – opening)**

by Lachlan Philpott directed by Marilee Talkington

WHERE: Thick House, 1695 18th St, San Francisco.

(between Carolina St.& Arkansas St. in Potrero Hill)

PERFORMANCES:

Wed-Saturdays 8 PM

With Special Opening Night Performances on Mondays, 8PM

Tickets: Prices range from \$10-\$35 progressively during the course of the run.

We offer Pay-What-You-Can Preview performances and student/senior/group rates.

Tickets: Visit www.crowdedfire.org for more information and to purchase tickets.

Box Office by phone 415) 746-9238

www.crowdedfire.org or (415) 655-3866