



Crowded Fire Theater

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Press Page: www.crowdedfire.org/press/

**ANNOUNCING THE CREATIVE TEAM FOR THE WEST COAST PREMIERE OF NGOZI ANYANWU'S
THE LAST OF THE LOVE LETTERS: A MEDITATION ON LONELINESS,
DIRECTED BY NAILAH UNOLE DIDA-NESE'AH HARPER-MALVEAUX**

April 24 - May 3, 2025

at Z Below

450 Florida St, San Francisco, CA 94110

(NEW DATE) Press opening Saturday, April 26, 2025, at 8 PM

San Francisco, CA; February 27, 2025 - Crowded Fire Theater (CFT) announces the cast and creative team for the upcoming West Coast Premiere of *The Last Of The Love Letters: A Meditation On Loneliness* by **Ngozi Anyanwu**, directed by **Nailah Unole dida-Nese'ah Harper-Malveaux**.

Hold on? Or leave it behind? Two isolated humans unravel and examine the thing they love the most. With fierce humor, aching poetry, and piercing honesty, theatrical powerhouse Ngozi Anyanwu asks, "How does love transform us—and the world—both in its presence and absence?" Offering a plea and a painful goodbye wrapped into one, *The Last of the Love Letters* gets to the heart of what it is to love and be loved.

From director **Harper-Malveaux**, "Love may be the most sought-after and mysterious emotion, filled with contradictions and the center of countless stories. Yet, there is so little consensus on what it truly is, how it feels in our bodies, and how essential it is to our liberation movements. As deeply rooted systems of oppression become increasingly visible and viscerally felt, *The Last Of The Love Letters* urges us to listen to the wisdom of our bodies in love, in heartbreak, and, yes, in madness. What truths do the voices in your head convey? What knowledge is uncovered in the erotic? What joy is released by refusing to assimilate, adjust, or normalize? What freedom lies at the bottom of falling too deeply? I feel profoundly grateful and emboldened to share this story in these times alongside this team of trans, gender-expansive, and queer artists from the global majority and engage in this deep love and exploration with our audiences."

CFT Leader of Artistic Producing **Caro Asercion** writes, "In our 25+ years of history, Crowded Fire has sought to be a tinderbox for Bay Area theatre that is bold, experimental, and timely. *The Last Of The Love Letters* speaks directly to the urgency of our present cultural moment. **Ngozi Anyanwu's** lyrical prose is a raw, emotional workout for the actors onstage and for audiences alike, asking what it means to scrutinize the ways we love—and, indeed, for the very idea of love itself to come under scrutiny. We look forward to audiences joining us at Z Below to laugh, grieve, and reflect on these questions together."

Director **Harper-Malveaux** will lead this production featuring actors **Farrah Hamzeh** (actor - YOU), **Gabriele Christian** (actor - YOU NO. 2), and **hodari blue** (actor - PERSON). Designers and the creative team include **Maya Herbsman** (intimacy direction), **Jules Indelicato** (sound design), **Spense Matubang** (lighting design), **Taylor Mendez** (stage management), **G Momah** (dramaturgy), **Adin Walker** (choreography), **Jasmine Milan Williams** (costume design), and **Brendan Yungert** (scenic and props design).

Recognizing that COVID is still present and affecting our communities, CFT is committed to the safety of our artists and audiences. Masks will be encouraged in the theater at all times, and we are offering two mask-required performances on **Sunday, April 27th at 3 PM** and **Thursday, May 1st at 8 PM**. In addition, affordability and accessibility remain a priority, and all tickets for this production will be on a sliding scale, with no one turned away for lack of funds. We are also thrilled to offer an ASL-Interpreted performance on **Saturday, May 3rd at 3 PM**.

The Last Of The Love Letters runs at Z Below, 450 Florida Street in San Francisco, from April 24 through May 3 (press opening Saturday, April 26). Photos are available at <http://www.crowdedfire.org/press/> and <https://www.crowdedfire.org/love-letters>

BIOS:

Ngozi Anyanwu (Playwright, she/her) A playwright, storyteller, and a 2020 Steinberg Playwright Award winner. Her play *The Last of the Love Letters* premiered at the Atlantic Theater in the fall of 2021. Previous productions include *Good Grief* (Vineyard Theatre in NYC/Center Theatre Group in LA) and *The Homecoming Queen* (sold-out world premiere run at the Atlantic Theatre). *Good Grief* was on the Kilroys List 2016, a semi-finalist for the Princess Grace Award, and won the Humanitas Award. *The Homecoming Queen* was on the Kilroys List 2017 and was a Leah Ryan Finalist. Her play *Nike...* (Kilroys List 2017) was workshopped at The New Black Fest in conjunction with The Lark and The Strand Festival in conjunction with A.C.T and Space on Ryder Farm. Ngozi also has commissions with NYU, The Old Globe, Two Rivers Theatre, The Atlantic Theatre, and Steppenwolf. Anyanwu has also received residencies from LCT3, Space on Ryder Farm, the Djerassi Resident Artists Program, The New Harmony Project, New York Stage and Film, and Page 73. She attended Point Park University (BA) and received her MFA in Acting from the University of California, San Diego.

Nailah Unole dida-Nese'ah Harper-Malveaux (Director, she/her) is a queer multiracial theatre director and generative artist focused on transformative new work that creates space for radical community imagination. She facilitates and curates artistic engagements that center and celebrate the beauty, complexity, resilience, healing, and joy of those living in the margins. Directing highlights include: the West Coast premiere of *Edit Annie* by Mary Glen Fredrick (co-directed with Leigh Rondon-Davis), the world premiere of *Getting There* by Dipika Guha, *The Light* by Loy A. Webb, and numerous A.C.T. MFA productions, including *Sunset Baby*, *Belleville*, and *Next to Normal*. She was a member of the inaugural cohort of the Artistic Caucus, a group of 4 freelance artists designed to initiate curatorial disruption and advocate for new artists at Woolly Mammoth, Baltimore Center Stage, the Rep of St. Louis, and Long Wharf. She has worked at Center Theatre Group, Woolly Mammoth, Pasadena Playhouse, Williamstown Theater Festival, Berkeley Rep, Baltimore Center Stage, Z Space, and American Conservatory Theater. She received her B.A. in American Studies and Theatre Studies from Yale University.

Farrah Hamzeh (Actor - YOU, she/they) is a Palestinian creative from Amman, Jordan and is currently based in Los Angeles. She is a transfem and queer organizer, researcher, stripper, baker, actor, singer-songwriter, and dance healer who arrived in the US by way of education and asylum. With a deep love for and commitment to community-based organizing and performance, she's drawn to professional, personal, and artistic endeavors that center embodied healing and community. She loves ASMR, dancing, and sipping on a homemade iced lavender latte while listening to Fairuzyat.

Gabriele Christian (Actor - YOU NO. 2, they/them) is a San Francisco-based conceptual artist and descendant of stolen folk. Experimenting within somatic practices, language, performance composition, video production, and community arts facilitation, they locate and center BlaQ (Black and Queer) experience, vernacular, and aesthetics as wellsprings for radical futurity. They perform original work and collaborate trans- and inter-nationally, most recently Berlin, New York City, Vienna, and Amsterdam. They are a founding member

of multiple Bay Area born performance collectives and land projects including: RUPTURE; OYSTERKNIFE; and BlaQyard. They currently serve as Executive Director and Co-Artistic Director of Jess Curtis/Gravity, a body-based arts and accessibility non-profit living on in the wake of Jess Curtis' transition in March 2024. At the heart of all their work: exhaustive research into belonging, spirit, and desirability while living in the fangs of dehumanizing times.

hodari blue (Actor - PERSON, they/them) is a black and indonesian, oceanic, gender expansive multi-medium artist and facilitator who creates to hold, heal, and transform their experiences into new embodied worlds and stories. in doing this work, they intend to make space for others to do the same. hodari believes inner space is home to everything we've inherited and everything that is possible; and in order to become the worlds we want, we must learn to explore and work with the celestial earth matter within. you can find them being a teacher/student of liberatory movement and play (karate, freestyle dance, storytelling) at Destiny Arts Center and beyond.

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For Calendar Editors:

The West Coast Premiere of *The Last Of The Love Letters*

directed by Nailah Unole dida-Nese'ah Harper-Malveaux

April 24 - May 3 (**Press Opening Saturday, April 26th**)

Z Below, 450 Florida St, San Francisco, CA 94110

PERFORMANCES:

****NEW DATE**:** Press / Opening Night Performance on Saturday, April 26, 8 PM

Wednesdays - Sundays at 8 PM

Sunday, April 27 Matinee at 3 PM

Monday, April 28 at 8 PM

Saturday, May 3 Matinee at 3 PM

Mask-Required performances on Sunday, April 27th at 3 PM and Thursday, May 1st at 8 PM

ASL-Interpreted performance on Saturday, May 3rd at 3 PM

TICKETS:

Pay What You Can Previews: \$18 online or Pay-What-You-Can at the door (in \$5 increments); pending availability

Tickets: General admission, \$25+, no one turned away for lack of funds (NOTAFLOF).

Visit <https://www.crowdedfire.org/love-letters/> for more information and to purchase tickets.

Box Office phone (415) 523-0034 ext 1, email: BoxOffice [at] crowdedfire.org

www.crowdedfire.org or (415) 523-0034 ext 0

Cast photos are available at <http://www.crowdedfire.org/press/> and <https://www.crowdedfire.org/love-letters/>