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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Baltimore Center Stage Announces All Black Women Cast and Artistic Team for *The Glorious World of Crowns, Kinks and Curls*

Baltimore, MD, February 16, 2021---- Baltimore Center Stage has announced the cast and artistic team for the world premiere of *The Glorious World of Crowns, Kinks and Curls*, the first offering of the Mainstage Series. The play will be delivered solely virtually.

The Glorious World of Crowns, Kinks and Curls is a world premiere play written by multiplatform storyteller **Keli Goff**. A collection of monologues in the tradition of *For Colored Girls...*, *The Glorious World of Crowns, Kinks and Curls* explores the complex relationship women have with their hair, and reveals that for Black women in particular, hair is deeply personal and political. **Playwright Keli Goff** has previously written about the politics of hair as a journalist. An Emmy nominated documentary producer, she also works as a screenwriter and recently joined the writers' room of the *Sex and the City* revival, *And Just Like That...*, announced last week. **In addition to Goff, all of the major creative and crew roles for this production are filled by a team of extraordinary Black women.**

"*The Glorious World of Crowns, Kinks and Curls* is a play about self love," said **Director Bianca LaVerne Jones**. "It highlights Black hair stories of oppression of self and from outsiders. We are going to address it, get real about it, call it out and HEAL. *The Glorious World* will lay on display the intimate emotions and stories of Black women and their hair."

The various stories in the play will be familiar and relatable to many Black women. "Twisted, curled, fried, picked and plaited, Black women have always had an adventurous and creative relationship with our hair," said **Pulitzer Prize winning playwright Lynn Nottage**. "*The Glorious World of Crowns, Kinks and Curls* is a funny, heartbreaking and ultimately healing play about the role hair plays in unbraiding, shaping and celebrating our Black identity." **Nottage was joined in her praise of the play by other notables including feminist legend Gloria Steinem, supermodel Beverly Johnson and Harvard's**

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Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (Please see additional page titled "Endorsements for *The Glorious World...*".)

The cast includes **Stori Ayers***, **Awa Sal Secka***, and **Shayna Small***. The artistic team includes **Bianca LaVerne Jones** (Director); **Keli Goff** (Playwright); **Dede Ayite** (Scenic and Costume Designer); **Stacey Derosier** (Lighting Designer); **Diggle** (Associate Scenic Designer); **Lauren Jackson** (Assistant Director); **Nikiya Mathis** (Hair & Wig Designer); **Twi McCallum** (Sound Designer); **Dean Radcliffe-Lynes** (Film & Post Production); **David Lee Roberts Jr.** (Video Director & Editor); **Danielle Teague-Daniels*** (Production Stage Manager); and **Grace Chariya** (Production Management/Stage Management Apprentice).

**Members of Actors' Equity Association.*

"What Keli is doing in this piece is bigger than Baltimore Center Stage, and is bigger than the American Theatre – she's calling in some of the biggest conversations happening in our society, as well as some of the most intimate and personal ones," said **Baltimore Center Stage Artistic Director Stephanie Ybarra**. "The constellation of stories that make up *The Glorious World of Crowns, Kinks and Curls* center tenderness, nuance, and laughter, lifting up the voices of Black women in our national dialogue. I'm so grateful for the opportunity to support Keli, Bianca, and this incredible team of Black artists as they brilliantly craft this virtual theatrical experience to kick off our Mainstage Series."

This show is Baltimore Center Stage's first play of the 2020/21 Season. It is being produced in person and filmed. In order to produce in person, a detailed safety plan was developed in line with guidance from the city of Baltimore and the Centers for Disease Control. Actor's Equity Association, The Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, and United Scenic Artists approved this plan. The actors, director, company manager, and stage manager have entered a "bubble." After traveling by private vehicle and one week of quarantining, each member of the "bubble" received three negative Covid-19 test results before entering. No one in the "bubble" needs to leave for any reason, as groceries and any other necessities are being delivered. All members of the "bubble" are being tested weekly. The stage manager and director have worked together to craft a schedule that minimizes the amount of people at rehearsal at any one time. The play is being staged so that actors are at least six feet apart. The production is being distributed entirely virtually.

The Glorious World of Crowns, Kinks and Curls begins streaming on **March 18, 2021**. Press Night is **Thursday, March 18**. Media members may request performance attendance via the [online press form](#). Press members will have access to the performance for two weeks. Downloadable media can be found at <https://www.centerstage.org/plays-and-events/mainstage/the-glorious-world-of-crowns-kinks-and-curls/>.

For interview requests, and other media related inquiries please contact the Communications office. For general information, visit www.centerstage.org or call the box office at 410.332.003.



Artwork for *The Glorious World of Crowns, Kinks and Curls* was created by Suzanne Coley.

About Baltimore Center Stage

Designated the State Theater of Maryland in 1978, Baltimore Center Stage provides the highest quality theater and programming for all members of our communities, including youth and families, under the leadership of Artistic Director Stephanie Ybarra and Executive Director Michael Ross. Baltimore Center Stage ignites conversations and imaginations by producing an eclectic season of professional productions across two mainstages and an intimate 99-seat theater, through engaging community programs, and with inspiring education programs. Everything we do at Center Stage is led by our core values—chief among them being Access For All. Our mission is heavily rooted in providing active and open accessibility for everyone, regardless of any and all barriers, to our Mainstage performances, education initiatives, and community programming.





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The Glorious World of Crowns, Kinks and Curls **Endorsements**

Praise for *The Glorious World of Crowns, Kinks and Curls* below:

- "The stories in *The Glorious World of Crowns, Kinks and Curls* are funny, sometimes sad but ultimately uplifting. Of course some of them reminded me of my own hair journey in the fashion industry. But most of all they reminded me that we all have a responsibility to work towards continuing to make standards of beauty more inclusive." – **Beverly Johnson (First African American woman to grace the cover of American Vogue)**
- "*The Glorious World of Crowns, Kinks and Curls* is not just a play about hair, but about identity and the quest for equality. As such, it is a play all should see and celebrate." – **Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (World renowned scholar of African American culture & Host of *Finding Your Roots* on PBS)**
- "Twisted, curled, fried, picked and plaited, Black women have always had an adventurous and creative relationship with our hair. *The Glorious World of Crowns, Kinks and Curls* is a funny, heartbreaking and ultimately healing play about the role hair plays in unbraiding, shaping and celebrating our Black identity."
– **Lynn Nottage (Pulitzer Prize winning playwright)**
- "Because hair is the most personal and universal signifier of belonging, *The Glorious World of Crowns, Kinks and Curls* is an ageless and transracial celebration of the human condition." – **Gloria Steinem (Famed feminist activist)**

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