



**PRESS RELEASE  
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**AURORA THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS BAY AREA PREMIERE  
OF MARY KATHRYN NAGLE'S *MANAHATTA***

*Indigenous lawyer and playwright Nagle presents a sharp look at how  
history repeats for Native Americans from 1626 to 2008.*

**BERKELEY, CA (January 17, 2024)** Aurora Theatre Company marks the halfway point of its 32nd season with the Bay Area premiere of Mary Kathryn Nagle's **MANAHATTA**. **Shannon R. Davis** directs **Linda Amayo-Hassan**, **Livia Gomes Dimarchi**, **Max Forman-Mullin**, **Anthony Fusco** (*The Flats*), **Ixtlán** (*Cyrano*), **Oogie Push**, and **Victor Talmadge** (*After the Revolution*) in this compelling play where history repeats itself in 1626 and 2008 when the Lenape people confront European notions of property and finance.

**MANAHATTA** will be presented in-person on Aurora's mainstage from **February 9-March 10 (Opening Night: February 15)**.

Aurora will also offer a week of streaming **MANAHATTA** performances for audiences to enjoy in their homes. Streaming performances will run concurrently with in-person performances from **March 5-10**.

Said Artistic Director Josh Costello: "At Aurora, we're always trying to present plays that connect to the present moment, and that connect the present moment to larger ideas and themes. **MANAHATTA** does that beautifully, drawing parallels between the colonialism of the Dutch occupation of the island now known as Manhattan and the predatory lending practices that led to the housing crash of 2008 -- and that continue in various forms today, further marginalizing communities that already face enormous challenges. Manahatta wrestles with these ideas on a

very human level, showcasing the people affected by these practices and their often-complex relationships with those who further the forces of exploitation.”

**SYNOPSIS:** A young Lenape woman, Jane Snake, returns to her ancestral homeland, Manahatta, to work as a securities trader on Wall Street – the once walled street built by enslaved Africans to keep the Indigenous Lenape out. Set against the backdrop of the Occupy Wall Street movement and across time, **MANAHATTA** draws parallels between the forced removal, taxation, and fiscal impact on Native Americans during the 2008 financial crisis and the 1626 Dutch purchase of the island of Manahatta/Manhattan. Playwright Mary Kathryn Nagle (a citizen of the Cherokee Nation) teases the duality in Jane as she seeks to uncover her complicity in infrastructure designed to destroy her people; Jane’s career is thriving on “the island of many hills” (*Manahatta* in Lenape), while back home in Oklahoma, her mother and sister are grieving the loss of family, and struggling to maintain their culture, language, and their finances to stay in their over-mortgaged home.

The *New Haven Review* calls Nagle’s play “**fascinating and provocative.**”

Post show discussions for **MANAHATTA** will be led by Aurora staff or members of the Creative Team, and hosted after the show on the following days: **Friday, February 16; Tuesday, February 20; Wednesday, February 28; Thursday, March 7.** Aurora INsights, an in-depth conversation about themes of the play offered to Aurora donors of any level, will be held at 4pm on **Saturday, March 2.**

### **MANAHATTA** Cast and Creative Team

**Mary Kathryn Nagle (she/her)** is a citizen of the Cherokee Nation and an alum of the 2013 Public Theater Emerging Writers Group. Commissions include Arena Stage, Rose Theater, Portland Center Stage, Denver Center for the Performing Arts, Yale Repertory Theatre, Round House Theatre, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the Kansas City Repertory Theatre and Santa Fe Opera. She is an attorney whose work focuses on the restoration of tribal sovereignty and the inherent right of Indian Nations to protect their women and children from domestic violence and sexual assault.

**Shannon R. Davis (she/they)** is a Bay Area director, educator, & community connector originally from Wisconsin. She is a Queer woman of mixed Indigenous/Native descent. She has most recently been: in the Cal Shakes Artist Circle, a Visiting Professor at Saint Mary’s College, the Director of Community Connections at American Conservatory Theater, a Guest Artist/Lecturer at UC-Berkeley, and a co-founder of Bay Area Native Theatre Artists as well as the Bay Area Accountability Workgroup. She holds an MFA in Directing & Acting from UW Madison. She’s worked with: New Native Theatre, SF Shakes, A.C.T., Oregon Shakespeare

Festival, Aurora Theatre, Native Writers Theatre, American Repertory Theatre, American Indian Community House, Cal Shakes, Saint Mary's, Anchorage Opera, Theatre of Yugen, Berkeley Rep, MoxieArts, StageWrite, Brava Theater, Theatre Battery, Ohio University: Tantrum Theatre, Ashland New Play Festival, PlayGround, Freestyle Love Supreme, Forward Theatre, UC-Berkeley, Shotgun Players, TheaterWorks, Marin Shakespeare, Renaissance Theaterworks, Playwrights Foundation, & others.

**Linda Amayo-Hassan (she/her)** makes her Aurora debut. Amayo-Hassan is an actor, director, and playwright, and she is the Artistic Director of the recently formed theatre company Theatre Cultura. She has worked as an actor and playwright in the Bay Area, Kansas City, and New York City. Amayo-Hassan holds a BFA in Theater from Emporia State University, and an MFA in Acting from the University of Missouri–Kansas City.

**Livia Gomes Dimarchi (she/they)** also makes her Aurora debut. Recent credits include Recent credits: Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing* at SF Shakes (also directed by Shannon R. Davis); Cassandra in *Somewhere* by Marisela Treviño Orta at Perspective Theater, Miri in *Sapience* at Playground SF and San Diego Rep Latinx Festival, and Lola in the world premiere of *Ghosts of Bogotá* at AlterTheater (both by the incredible Diana Burbano), Tania in *Native Gardens* at Center Rep and Left Edge, and Olivia/Maria in *Twelfth Night* also with Perspective Theater (formerly Arabian Shakes, TBA Winner for Best Ensemble). She was also a part of the original production of *The River Bride* as Belmira, presented at Alter Theater Ensemble. Other companies: SF Playhouse, Magic Theater, Marin Shakespeare, Playwrights Foundation, BRAVA, Shotgun Players, among others. She holds a B.A. in Theater and Performance Studies from the University of California, Berkeley and is an Associate Artist with Alter Theater Ensemble and a company member at Playground SF.

**Max Forman-Mullin (he/him)** has performed with numerous Bay Area theatre companies, including Shotgun Players, SF Playhouse, Playwrights Foundation, Berkeley Rep, Word for Word, and Cutting Ball. In addition to acting, Forman-Mullin has worked extensively as a teaching artist and applied theatre practitioner with people of all ages, in schools, community centers, and prisons. He continues his work with incarcerated people as a paralegal at a local criminal defense law office. Forman-Mullin holds a B.A. in Theater from Bard College and an M.A. in Applied Theatre from CUNY School of Professional Studies. He makes his Aurora debut.

**Anthony Fusco (he/him)** was most recently seen in Aurora's pandemic-era original audiodrama *The Flats* (2020). A multi award-winning actor and Bay Area theatre mainstay, Fusco has performed in numerous major roles and productions since returning to the area in 1999 after 20 years working on- and off-Broadway and at theatres around the country. In the Bay Area, Fusco's been seen at A.C.T., CalShakes, Berkeley Rep, SF Playhouse, Marin Theatre Company, and

TheatreWorks Silicon Valley, among others. He is a 1983 graduate of The Juilliard School, and trained subsequently with The Barrow Group. Fusco is one of just 10 American actors to be named a 2023 Lunt-Fontanne Fellow by the Ten Chimneys Foundation.

**Ixtlán (no matter)** is a proud relative of the Native American Plains Nations and Mexican Indigenous peoples. They studied acting in New York at the Herbert Berghof Studio, and with various teachers from L.A. and N.Y. Notable stage credits include: A.C.T.'s *A Christmas Carol* as Giles and Ensemble; Marco in Word for Word's *Citizen*; Bahoma in AlterTheater's *Pueblo Revolt*; Nolan in *Braided* at CalShakes; Borrachio in SF Shakes' *Much Ado About Nothing*; Seketemaqua/Luke in *Manahatta* at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and Yale Repertory Theater; Wolf in Perseverance Theater's *Winter Bear*; Menelaus in *Helen*; Poe in *Puppets and Poe*; Jakubi in *A Noh Christmas Carol* at Theatre of Yugen; and Barrow Group Theater Company's *Last of the Caucasians*. Film and television credits include *The Monster Project* film and *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia*.

**Oogie Push (she/her)** is member of the Bear Clan from the Meskwaki Nation near Tama, Iowa, and has been a theatremaker for over 20 years. Push works as an actor in the Twin Cities with various theatre companies, does storytelling performances, works as a production assistant in the Twin Cities tv/film/commercial industry, and at times emcees events. She is also creating a documentary series about cultural aspects of the Meskwaki Tribe. *Tama Flint: A Meskwaki Tradition* is the first in the series and is hitting the Film Festival circuit this year and is available for screenings.

In November 2024, Full Circle Theater will produce Push's play *Adventures of a Traveling Meskwaki* at the Andy Boss Stage in St. Paul, MN. Push earned an A.A. in Theatre and a B.A. in American Indian Studies with an emphasis in Theatre from Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kansas. She also holds an M.F.A. in Theatre: Design & Technology from the University of Missouri–Kansas City.

**Victor Talmadge (he/him)** was previously seen at Aurora in *Awake and Sing* (2009) and *After the Revolution* (2013). Most recently he was seen in *The Road to Mecca* at Z Space and *Indecent* at SF Playhouse. Other Bay Area credits include CalShakes, Berkeley Rep, A.C.T., TheaterWorks Silicon Valley, Oakland Theater Project, Magic Theatre, and Santa Cruz Shakes. He has worked extensively in New York and regional theaters, and was on Broadway in the world premiere of David Mamet's *November*. He played The King in the Tony Award-winning production of the Broadway National Tour of *The King and I*, and was seen as Scar in the Los Angeles production of *The Lion King*.

Talmadge boasts extensive film and television credits, as well and he was a recurring character on the TV series *Manhattan* and *Vegas*. As a playwright, his play *The Gate Of Heaven* was

awarded The Nakashima Peace Prize. It was the first live theater to be produced at The U.S. Holocaust Memorial and has been subsequently performed at The Old Globe Theater, Ford's Theater, and The Annenberg Center, as well as various venues around the country. He is currently Professor of the Practice and Director of Theater Studies, Mills College at Northeastern University.

Understudies for **MANAHATTA** include **Tasi Alabastro (he/him)**, **Alan Coyne (he/him)**, and **Nailah Unole didanas'ea Harper-Malveaux (she/her)**.

The creative team for **MANAHATTA** includes **James Ard (he/him)** - Sound Designer; **Asa Benally (he/him)** - Costume Designer; **Brooke Cox (they/she)** - Assistant Stage Manager; **Joy Gonzalez (she/her)** - Lead Props; **Ray Gonzalez (they/them)** - Stage Manager; **Ray Oppenheimer (he/him)** - Lighting Designer; **Wolfgang Wachalovsky (they/them)** - Video Designer; **Deanna L. Zibello (she/her)** - Scenic Designer.

### **CALENDAR EDITORS**

Aurora Theatre Company continues its 32nd season with **MANAHATTA** by Mary Kathryn Nagle. Shannon R. Davis directs this compelling play where history repeats itself in 1626 and 2008 when the Lenape people confront European notions of property and finance.

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### **DATES**

**Previews:** Friday 2/9 and Saturday 2/10 at 8 p.m.

Sunday, 2/11 at 2 p.m.

Tuesday, 2/13 and Wednesday, 2/14 at 7 p.m.

**Open: Thursday, February 15 at 8 p.m. (PRESS NIGHT)**

**Close:** Sunday, March 10 at 2 p.m.

**Shows: IN-PERSON PERFORMANCES (February 9-March 10):**

Tuesday and Wednesday at 7 p.m.; Thursday through Saturday at 8 p.m.; Sunday at 2 p.m.

**Two performances per week (WEDNESDAY evenings and SUNDAY matinees) are designated mask-required performances. For all other performances, masks will be encouraged but not required.**

Aurora's policy will apply to everyone inside the building other than the actors, to include all audience, ushers, and staff.

Learn more about Aurora's updated COVID-19 Infectious Disease Policy at [auroratheatre.org/covid19safety](http://auroratheatre.org/covid19safety).

**STREAMING PERFORMANCES (March 5-10):**

Each performance is presented as a filmed production for audiences to enjoy in their homes.

Each performance is available for 36 hours, from 12 p.m. on the performance date to midnight the following day.

**TICKETS**

For single tickets (\$20-\$65), or subscriptions and flex passes (\$102-\$310), the public can call **(510) 843-4822** or visit [www.auroratheatre.org](http://www.auroratheatre.org).

**PRESS**

**Please do not reply to this media advisory for review tickets. Press review invites will be sent to selected media.**

**ABOUT AURORA THEATRE COMPANY**

As the storyteller for our community, Aurora Theatre Company inspires new audiences and longtime theatre lovers alike with the visceral power of live theatre. Our venues, the most intimate professional stages in the Bay Area, highlight great acting, nuanced language, and an immediacy that makes for exhilarating theatre. By telling deeply relevant stories, we're building a new culture of theatregoing in the Bay Area and contributing to a revitalization of theatre nationwide, challenging all of us to think deeper, laugh louder, and engage more purposefully and profoundly with our neighbors and our world. Aurora has an operating budget of \$2.3 million.

*Aurora Theatre Company gratefully acknowledges Associate Season Sponsors: Craig & Kathy Moody.  
Executive Sponsor: David Wood. Associate Sponsor: Gertrude Allan.*

*Aurora Theatre Company gratefully acknowledges the following foundations and government agencies for their support: City of Berkeley Civic Arts Program & Civic Arts Commission, National Endowment for the Arts, Harold & Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust, and The Shubert Foundation.*

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