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**AURORA THEATRE COMPANY NAMES OAKLAND NATIVE  
DAWN MONIQUE WILLIAMS  
ASSOCIATE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR**

**(BERKELEY, Calif., May 14, 2019)** -- Aurora Theatre Company announced today that it has hired award-winning Oakland-native Dawn Monique Williams as the company's first ever Associate Artistic Director. Williams will fill the position that incoming Artistic Director Josh Costello will leave vacant. In addition to literary management and artistic support, this new full-time position will also encompass Aurora's new community partner program and community engagement initiatives. Williams starts August 2019.

"I couldn't be more pleased to bring Dawn Monique Williams on board as Aurora's first Associate Artistic Director," said Costello. "Dawn is a visionary director who is building a national reputation with her work at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and elsewhere. She's also a first-class arts leader. I can't imagine a more ideal artistic partner to join me in leading Aurora into its next chapter."

Williams brings 20+ years directing and arts experience to Aurora. Most recently, she spent six seasons as Artistic Associate and a resident artist at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, where she ran the professional development program and directed such titles as *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Julius Caesar*, and *Hamlet*. Williams has worked in theatres across the country, including HERE Arts Center, Profile Theatre (Portland), American Conservatory Theater, Chautauqua Theater Company, and African American Shakespeare Company, among others. Her

recent credits include *The Secretaries* (Willamette Week's Top 10 Portland Theatre Productions of 2018), *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Piano Lesson*, and *By the Way, Meet Vera Stark*.

Williams said: "Joining the artistic staff at Aurora is thrilling. I think Josh has a great vision for Aurora's future, in particular, civic engagement. I am honored that Josh invited me to join this team and is trusting me to build and cultivate new partnerships with our neighbors in our community and within the region. As someone with deep roots in Berkeley—my parents met here, I was raised in south Berkeley, my daughter was born here—this opportunity to keep the art in conversation with the community is particularly special. The homecoming is full circle in many ways...I was a drama kid at Berkeley High after all."

Williams' awards include a Princess Grace Theatre Fellowship, a TCG Leadership U Residency Grant, the Killian Directing Fellowship at OSF, and a Drama League Directing Fellowship. She holds an MA in Dramatic Literature from San Francisco State University and an MFA in Directing from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Managing Director Julie Saltzman Kellner spoke highly of the new addition.

"I met Dawn earlier this year and was immediately impressed; she is smart, strong, and talented, and I am thrilled that she will be joining the Aurora team," she said. "As an East Bay native, and having done work in professional development, community building activities, and as an acclaimed artist, she is the perfect person for this new role. I'm very excited for Aurora's future with her on our team and look forward to the work that we can all do together."

Williams will make her Aurora directing debut with *Bull in a China Shop* this fall.

To learn more about Dawn Monique Williams and her work, visit [www.dawnmoniquewilliams.com](http://www.dawnmoniquewilliams.com).

**Notes for Editors:** Interviews and photos are available upon request. Please contact Dayna Kalakau to schedule.

## **ABOUT AURORA**

Aurora Theatre Company is known for work that invigorates audiences and artists through a shared experience of professional, intimate theatre. Aurora challenges itself and the broader community to do better, think deeper, laugh louder and cast wider nets of empathy toward the world. Through its productions of both classic and new works, it supports the Bay Area

community by hiring local artists and artisans. It has an operating budget of just over \$2 million. Learn more at [auroratheatre.org](http://auroratheatre.org).

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