



For Immediate Release: Theatre

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Director and cast available for interviews, high-res pics available at

<http://therhino.org/press-room-apologies-lorraine>

Theatre Rhinoceros Presents

Apologies to Lorraine Hansberry (You Too August Wilson):

A Free Staged Reading

Rachel Lynett's Yale Drama Series Prize-Winning Play Interrogates Racial Gatekeeping,
De-centers Whiteness

February 7, 2023

January 23, 2023, San Francisco - Two years ago, Rachel Lynett's play *Apologies to Lorraine Hansberry (You Too August Wilson)* was selected from 2,000 submissions to win the coveted Yale Drama Series Prize; this winter, San Franciscans will have the privilege of seeing Lynett's daring, straight-to-your-face allegory read and staged in person. *Apologies* is set in the fictional world of a post-second Civil War, Bronx Bay, an all-Black state established to protect "Blackness." As Jules' new partner Yael moves into town, community members argue over if Yael, who is Dominican, can stay.

In the world of Lynett's play, the freedom dream of a society that centers Black joy and identity, actively shutting out the oppressor, is only the starting point for analysis and interrogation - what does "racial safety" actually look like when played out by imperfect human beings? What are the limits of this experimental reality? These are the play's clear questions for people of color, particularly Black audience members. Says the character Jules: "White folx call what I'm about to do 'exposition.' But the Black folx in the audience know I'm about to preach [...] When I get bored, I like to remove one historical event and say to myself 'would that make the playing field fair?' What if there had been a revolt when Trump got elected? Or, what if there had been no slavery? Like at all. Can you even imagine the world without it? Our whole socio-eco-system is built on the backs of people who look like me." The play may have *Apologies* in its title, but Lynett does not seem concerned with making any - there will be no sugar coating on these words.

The staged reading is directed by highly accomplished, award-winning Bay Area theatre artist Kimberly Ridgeway, who is interested in dissecting and discussing the same questions: "What if there was utopia just for the protection of Blackness?" and "Does subconscious bias threaten paradise?" For Ridgeway, "*Apologies* is a timely, comedic, thought-provoking look at Blackness, what it means to be Black, and why Black people are not monolithic."

Apologies to Lorraine Hansberry (You Too August Wilson): A Free Staged Reading is performed by a cast of Bay Area actors at Theatre Rhinoceros, the longest-running LGBTQ+ theatre in the world.

Calendar Editors

What: **Apologies to Lorraine Hansberry (You Too August Wilson): A Free Staged Reading**

When: Tuesday, February 7 at 7pm

Where: Theatre Rhinoceros, 4229 18th St., San Francisco, CA 94114
Castro Street MUNI Station; F Market, 33 Stanyan, 24 Divisadero
Streetcar and Bus Lines

Tickets: Free

Info / Res: <https://www.therhino.org/free-staged-readings> or <https://fb.me/e/3bK0KJi8r>

Winner of the 2021 Yale Drama Series Prize, *Apologies to Lorraine Hansberry (You Too August Wilson)* by **Rachel Lynett** centers Blackness while it interrogates the feasibility of a racially safe society - what would actually happen if a utopic all-Black state were achieved? *Apologies* is set in the fictional world of a post-second Civil War, Bronx Bay, an all-Black state established to protect "Blackness." As Jules' new partner Yael moves into town, community members argue over if Yael, who is Dominican, can stay. *Apologies to Lorraine Hansberry (You Too August Wilson): A Free Staged Reading* is directed by playwright, actor, director, and producer **Kimberly Ridgeway** and performed by **Brittany Sims, Janel Chanté, Dedrick Weathersby, Katherine Hamilton, and Aaron Royce Jones**.

Hi-res Digital Images Available for Download: <https://www.therhino.org/press-room-apologies-lorraine>

The Artists

Rachel Lynett is a queer Afro-Latinx playwright who writes dark comedies about complex, complicated women of color. About her characters, she states, "These women are neither saints or villains; they're eternally both. These women are intelligent, blistered, and, most importantly, real." Her recent playwriting credits include commissions with Barrington Stage Theatre Company (*Holy Ground*), Florida Studio Theatre (*Carry Me* and *As You Are*), and Theatre Lab (*Last Night*).

Kimberly Ridgeway is a director, actor, playwright and producer who wrote, produced and directed the stage plays *No More Secrets*, *Prospect Place*, *Heavy Burdens*, *The Drowning Pool*, and *The Gigolo Chronicles*. Kimberly has directed projects for Altarena Playhouse, Contra Costa Civic Theatre, Dragon Productions Theatre Company, Ubuntu Theatre Project, Bay Area Performing Arts Collective, Bay Area Drama Company, SF Playhouse, Playwrights Center of San Francisco, SF Playground, 3Girls Theatre, TheatreFirst and two virtual readings for Theatre Rhinoceros. Some of Kim's notable acting roles include *The Human Ounce* (World Premiere), *Wonderland* (World Premiere), *Doubt*, *All the Way*, *The Piano Lesson*, Colman Domingo's *DOT*, and Katori Hall's *The Mountaintop* for which she won the BroadwayWorld San Francisco Award for Best Leading Actress in a Local Play. Kim can currently be seen in *Slow Food* at Altarena Playhouse (through February 20th) and will be making her directing debut at Spokane Civic Theatre in April 2023.

Janel Chanté portrays “Alice” in *Apologies to Lorraine Hansberry (You Too August Wilson): A Free Staged Reading*.

Katherine Hamilton portrays “Yael” in *Apologies to Lorraine Hansberry (You Too August Wilson): A Free Staged Reading*.

Aaron Royce Jones portrays “Izaak” in *Apologies to Lorraine Hansberry (You Too August Wilson): A Free Staged Reading*.

Brittany Sims portrays “Jules” in *Apologies to Lorraine Hansberry (You Too August Wilson): A Free Staged Reading*.

Dedrick Weathersby portrays “Lorenzo” in *Apologies to Lorraine Hansberry (You Too August Wilson): A Free Staged Reading*.

Theatre Rhinoceros was founded in 1977, and is the longest running LGBTQ+ theatre in the nation. We develop and produce works of theatre that enlighten, enrich, and explore both the ordinary and the extraordinary aspects of our queer community. Our emphasis is on new works, works about under-represented members of the larger queer community, and revivals of lesser known queer classics. Over the years Theatre Rhinoceros has received many awards of recognition including: Theatre Rhinoceros Day in the City Proclamation from Mayor Gavin Newsom, State Assembly Certificate of Recognition from Senator Mark Leno, recognitions from Congressperson Nancy Pelosi and Assembly Persons Tom Ammiano and Carole Migden, numerous Cable Car, BATCC and TBA Awards and Nominations, and the GLAAD Media Award for Best LGBT Theatre.

Public Service Announcements / Radio

15 seconds

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30 seconds

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1 minute

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