



# Lorraine Hansberry Theatre presents World Premiere of **IN THE EVENING BY THE MOONLIGHT**

New play celebrates the legacy of American playwright, artist,  
and activist Lorraine Hansberry

**April 19, 2023** | SAN FRANCISCO, CA

Lorraine Hansberry Theatre will present the world premiere of ***IN THE EVENING BY THE MOONLIGHT***, a new play uplifting the revolutionary playwright behind the company's name.

Set in her Waverly Place flat in New York, legendary writer Lorraine Hansberry shares a rowdy, scotch-filled evening debating, confronting fears, and celebrating the hope of revolution with the incomparable musician Nina Simone and the prolific writer James Baldwin. Artistic Director Margo Hall celebrates Hansberry's legacy by co-creating and directing the new play, written by Traci Tolmaire.

"The idea of producing a new work honoring the memory of our theatre's namesake came early on in my tenure," Hall says. "Most associate Lorraine with *A Raisin in the Sun*, but how many know Lorraine, the activist? The intellectual? We placed this artist at the center of our new play, and put her in dialogue with two other icons of American thought, activism, and artistry. It's a revelation!"

Tolmaire, a long-time collaborator of Hall, was astonished to learn her own life experiences were mirrored in Hansberry's story. In the production, she will also take the stage as Lorraine herself.

"Lorraine Hansberry and I share a few commonalities—being born and raised on the southside of Chicago, moving to New York to pursue artistic careers, and using our voices to share lived experiences and highlight what's possible," she says.

Based on biographies, interviews, documentaries, FBI records, and the Lorraine Hansberry and James Baldwin archives housed at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in Harlem, ***IN THE EVENING BY THE MOONLIGHT*** reimagines a magical moment in the life of Hansberry at the height of the Civil Rights Movement.

"At a time when books, art, culture, and Black history are being banned or altered, bringing forth this piece with co-creator Margo Hall about Lorraine Hansberry and her two close friends Nina Simone and James (Jimmy) Baldwin, feels intensely urgent, not only as a theatrical piece but as a glimpse into their humanity and friendship," Tolmaire says.

***IN THE EVENING BY THE MOONLIGHT*** will run at the **Young Performers Theater in the Fort Mason Center for Arts & Culture** June 15 - July 2, 2023.

For more information or tickets, visit [www.lhtsf.org/moonlight](http://www.lhtsf.org/moonlight).

## MEDIA CONTACT

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Photos: <https://bit.ly/3nVqNCf>

## FOR CALENDAR LISTINGS

WHAT: *IN THE EVENING BY THE MOONLIGHT*

WHEN: June 15 - July 2, 2023  
Thursdays - Saturdays at 8pm | Sundays at 3pm

TICKETS: \$15 - 50 | [www.lhtsf.org](http://www.lhtsf.org)

WHERE: Young Performers Theatre  
2 Marina Blvd  
Landmark Building D, Fort Mason Center  
San Francisco, CA 94123

## ARTISTIC TEAM

Written by Traci Tolmaire  
Co-Created & Directed By Margo Hall

Lorraine Hansberry: Traci Tolmaire  
Nina Simone: Ryan Nicole Austin  
James Baldwin: Rotimi Agbabiaka

Set Designer: Carlos Aceves  
Props Designer: Heidi Button  
Costume Designer: Jan Hunter  
Wardrobe Assistant: Mallory McDaniel  
Lighting Designer: Kevin Myrick  
Sound Designer: Ray Archie  
Stage Manager: Taylor Mendez  
Production Manager/Graphic Designer: Julius Rea

## BIOS

### TRACI TOLMAIRE

Multidisciplinary artist and south side Chicago native Traci Tolmaire has a career spanning over 15 years collaborating with groundbreaking theater makers including Hana Sharif, Marc Bamuthi Joseph, Michael

John Garcés, and Campo Santo. She received a BA in Theatre from Spelman College with studies at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts and trained in dance at various institutions including Sammy Dyer School of the Theatre, Lou Conte, Mark Morris, ODC, and Atlanta Ballet. Performance credits include Jelly's Last Jam (Le Petit Theatre); Cherchez La Femme (La MaMa ETC); Dancing On Eggshells (The Billie Holiday Theatre); Plenty of Time (New Federal Theatre); Mirrors In Every Corner (Intersection for the Arts/Campo Santo); Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat (Fulton Opera House); and Trouble in Mind (Actor's Express). Choreography credits include Jelly's Last Jam; Gee's Bend (Hartford Stage); and Dancing On Eggshells. Driven and inspired by new, collaborative work, she has been a company member of Marc Bamuthi Joseph's The Living Word project for ten years and performed in the national tours of red, black, & GREEN: a blues and /peh-LO-tah/ which premiered at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in San Francisco with additional performances at The Kennedy Center, MCA Chicago, and BAM in New York. In the Evening By the Moonlight is Traci's debut as a playwright. Her second full length play CHI-BOY is currently in development and scheduled to premiere in 2024.

### **MARGO HALL**

Margo Hall is an award winning actor, director, educator, and newly appointed Artistic Director of the Lorraine Hansberry Theatre. She has graced Bay Area stages for over 30 years as a performer and director and was awarded the Kenneth Rainin Fellowship in 2021 for Theater. She can be seen on the TV show BLINDSPOTTING on Starz. She recently appeared in the films BLINDSPOTTING and All Day and a Night. She directed How I Learned What I Learned at Marin Theatre Company, BARBECUE (which she also starred in) and Red Velvet for SF Playhouse and Brownsville, b-side for tray for Shotgun Players, In The Red and Brown Water and Polaroid Stories UC Berkeley. Acting credits include: Exit Strategy at The Aurora Theater. Marin Theater Company- JAZZ, Skeleton Crew, Gem of the Ocean, Fences and Seven Guitars. California Shakespeare Theater- God Person of Szechwan, Black Odyssey, Fences, Twelfth Night, A Midsummer Night's Dream, A Raisin in the Sun, A Winter's Tale, American Night: the Ballad of Juan Jose and SPUNK. American Conservatory Theater- Ah, Wilderness!, Once in a Lifetime and Marcus; or the Secret of Sweet. Aurora Theater- Trouble in Mind. Shotgun Players- A World in a Woman's Hands, Writing credits: The People's Temple at Berkeley Repertory Theater, which won the Glickman award for best new play in the Bay Area for 2005, and, Be Bop Baby, a Musical Memoir, a semi-autobiographical piece at Z Space. She is a founding member of Campo Santo, a multicultural San Francisco theater company and has directed, performed and collaborated on several new plays with artists such as Naomi Iizuka, Phillip Kan Gotanda, Sean San Jose, Octavio Solis Luis Saguar, and Jessica Hagedorn. She is also a professor at UC Berkeley and Chabot College in the Theater Department.

### **ROTIMI AGBABIAKA**

Rotimi Agbabiaka is an actor, writer, director, and teacher. Most recently, Rotimi played Theseus and Oberon in A Midsummer Night's Dream (Folger Theatre, DC) and originated the roles of Aladdin in The Magic Lamp (Presidio Theatre), Salima in House of Joy (CalShakes) and Cellphone/Narrator in If Pretty Hurts Ugly Must Be a Muhfucka (Playwrights Horizons, Off Broadway). Other acting credits include roles at American Conservatory Theatre, Yale Repertory Theatre, Magic Theatre, and the San Francisco Mime Troupe. Rotimi penned the solo shows Type/Caste (TBA award) and MANIFESTO; co-wrote the musical,

Seeing Red; co-directed the world premiere of The Red Shades: A Trans Superhero Rock Opera at Z Space; dazzles nightlife stages (as alter-ego Miss Cleo Patois); and teaches acting and solo performance at Stanford University. [www.rotimionline.com](http://www.rotimionline.com)

## **RYAN NICOLE AUSTIN**

2022 Rainin Foundation Fellow Ryan Nicole Austin's most fulfilling experiences intersect art and activism, using her career in music and media to empower community. Ryan, a proud member of the YBCA 100, is a featured artist on a GRAMMY-nominated project, featured on TEDx San Francisco, ESPN's NBA Christmas, & has performed for such notable figures as President Barack Obama. The California State Assembly-recognized artist is the Founder of The HAVEN Project – a cultural media housing justice initiative & FITTRIP – a travel fitness & wellness guide. She was Executive Director of Youth Movement Records, where she supported the aspirations of thousands of young people seeking careers in the arts, guiding their expressions towards justice. Ryan has been a playwright-in-residence at New York's Public Theater through the BARS workshop, and has been selected to present original works for the National Performance Network & National American Musical Theater Festival. Ryan is the co-writer of ACT-commissioned musical in development CoFounders and is engaged with several ongoing film and theater productions both as an actress and writer. Ryan is a proud mother and wife, and resides in her hometown of Oakland, CA.