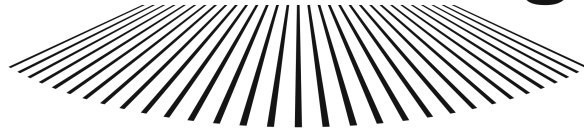


# The Western Stage



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **CONTACT**

**Cheryl Worthy**

**Email:** CWorthy@hartnell.edu

**831-755-6816**

Written by Jeffrey T. Heyer

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### ***The Mountaintop***

by Katori Hall

tagline: a warm and dramatic look at the last night in the life of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

### **THE STORY:**

Tired from delivering one of his most memorable speeches, Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. tries to get some rest in a little motel on what he does not realize is the night before his assassination. His people have all gone off to seek shelter from a breaking storm and his only company is a maid who works at the motel. Their encounters that night, playful, respectful and challenging, open the door to a humorous, compassionate, sometimes down-to-earth and sometimes otherworldly sharing of the Reverend's life, nature and dreams—and his ultimate destiny.

### **WHY THIS PLAY WAS CHOSEN**

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the great migration of talent, it has become increasingly difficult for theatre producers to cast plays. Nevertheless, Managing Artistic Director Melissa Chin-Parker has begun the process of bringing in new actors to expand the scope of The Western Stage's offerings. As an artist and as a person of color herself, she is bringing *The Mountaintop* to the Salinas stage as one of many important stories written from brilliant BIPOC artistic points of view. As this process continues, it will, in turn, afford more opportunities for BIPOC actors and create a richer cross-cultural experience at Western Stage for artists and audiences.

Having grown up in the 'Sixties herself, Melissa feels that this play brings out the truth of the time, how it has influenced current times, and how it will inform the future. She was profoundly moved by playwright Katori Hall's recreation of a very human Martin Luther King, Jr. As a great martyr of the 'Sixties, like those of other times, he is often come to be thought of as a saintly symbol, which detracts from his true call for others to not sit on the sidelines but to take up action. This Dr. King is a man who cared deeply and worked hard to make the United States live up to its promises to *all* of its people. His human flaws, as reflected in the play, are not evidence that he was not worthy the respect, but neither are they hidden from the audience. His non-violence was not passive, and his passions were aggressive. This production will demand that the audience experience Dr. King's anger, frustration, humor and pathos, and ultimately, great empathy for someone who envisions a better future for his children even as the shadow of death looms prematurely. Dr. King was one human being and one voice, but his words will echo and inspire many through the centuries.

**THE AUTHOR:** <https://www.katorihall.com/>

Katori Hall of Memphis, Tennessee, won the 2021 Pulitzer Prize for Drama for her play, *The Hot Wing King*. *The Mountaintop* won her the 2010 Olivier Award for Best New Play. She also received the Susan Smith Blackburn Award, the Lark Play Development Center Playwrights of New York (PONY) Fellowship, two Lecompte du Nouy Prizes from Lincoln Center, the Fellowship of Southern Writers Bryan Family Award in Drama, an NYFA Fellowship, the Columbia University John Jay Award for Distinguished Professional Achievement, the National Black Theatre's August Wilson Playwriting Award and the Lorraine Hansberry Playwriting Award.

Ms. Hall is also a television creator/producer. Her Starz drama series, *P-Valley*, adapted from her stage play, received Gotham, Independent Spirit, GLAAD Media, and NAACP Image Award nominations.

Ms. Hall's other works include the award-winning *Hurt Village*, which is currently in development as a feature film; plus *Hoodoo Love*, *Saturday Night/Sunday Morning*, *WHADDABLOODCLOT!!!*, *Our Lady of Kibeho*, *Purple is the Colour of Mourning* and *The Blood Quilt*. Her most recent accomplishment was to write and produce the hit Broadway musical, *Tina: The Tina Turner Musical*. This earned her a Tony Award nomination for 'Best Book of a Musical' and as producer in the 'Best Musical' category. When *Tina* received a production at the West End, Katori received an Olivier nomination for 'Best New Musical.'

**PRODUCTION TEAM:**

Directed by: Rebecca Haley Clark. Rebecca's work has been seen in *Cycle-Logical*, *The Aliens*, *The Roaring Girl*, *Shakespeare is Brazilian* and *The Owl Answers*. Rebecca completed the Masters of Classical and Contemporary Text directing course at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in 2019. She holds an undergraduate degree in Drama and Comparative Ethnic Studies at Columbia University and received a Fulbright research grant to study Shakespeare and race studies in Rio de Janeiro. She was born and raised in Santa Cruz, California and where she serves as the Education Programs Manager at Santa Cruz Shakespeare.

Stage Management: Erin Elizabeth Davison

Costume Design: Kaelen Novak

Hair & Makeup Design: Ashley Eoff

Lighting Design: John Englehorn

Projection Design: Dante Carballo

Props Design: Cory Aoki Trachsel

Scenic Design: David Parker

Sound Design: Jenny Cosgwell

**CAST:**

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. is played by Terrance Austin Smith (member of Actor's Equity Association)

CAMAE by Jarielle Jeffrey (Jarielle's appearance is partially sponsored by James McLean)

UNDERSTUDY FOR CAMAE, by Denisha Ervin

**WHEN:**

6/9, 6/9, 6/14, 6/25, 6/16, 6/21, 6/22, 6/29/ and 6/30;  
Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. Sundays at 2:00 p.m.

**WHERE**

The Studio Theatre in Building K on the Hartnell College Main Campus, 411 Central Avenue, Salinas, CA.

**\*\*MORE\*\***

### **TICKETING INFORMATION**

Online tickets and more information: [westernstage.com](http://westernstage.com)

Adult \$28; Seniors/Military/Teachers \$24; Hartnell Students FREE; Other Students \$16; Youths (5-15) \$12; Hartnell Faculty & Staff \$15; Student Rush \$5; Group tickets available by contacting the TWS Box Office (831) 755-6816.

TWS Box Office is open Wednesday-Saturday 5:00-8:00pm. and Sundays with performances 12-3pm. Leave voicemail to get a return call within 24 hours.

### **ACCOMMODATIONS**

This event is wheelchair accessible. Individuals requiring other accommodations should contact the ticket office at least one week prior to the event.

### **CURRENT COVID-19 INFORMATION**

The Western Stage is not requiring masking or proof of Covid negative test result or vaccination at this time. Ticket holders are asked to not attend if they have temperature or other symptoms or have been recently exposed to COVID-19 or have recently tested positive for COVID-19. This policy is subject to change based increase infection rates and or Hartnell College policy updates.

### **ABOUT THE WESTERN STAGE – ESTABLISHED 1974**

The Western Stage (TWS) is a professionally managed, community-based theatre company and educational program that provides opportunities for the creative process and high-level artistic experiences. Led by its educational mission and believing that strong arts experiences are important for building innovative, creative, and resilient communities, The Western Stage endeavors to offer a robust variety of programs designed for personal growth and skill development that address the need for a safe space where students and theatre enthusiasts may engage in theatre production while working side-by-side with theatre professionals. Through its annual production season, The Western Stage endeavors to provide strong pathways and development for artists throughout the continuum of a career in theatre and its related performing arts. The Western Stage develops new works that speak to the history and culture of the Salinas Valley and provides educational opportunities for students of all skill levels to explore and develop their unique talent. [www.westernstage.com](http://www.westernstage.com)

### **ABOUT HARTNELL COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT – ESTABLISHED 1920**

The Hartnell CCD provides educational services to the Salinas Valley and its neighboring regions through its main campus in Salinas, the Alisal Campus in East Salinas, and education centers in King City, Soledad, and Castroville. Hartnell College is a Hispanic Serving Institution that provides associate degrees, bachelor's degrees and certificate programs. It prepares students to transfer to four-year colleges and universities and to enter the workforce with necessary skills. Hartnell College is known for its innovative public and private partnerships that support world class education for STEM, career technical education, fine and performing arts, humanities and social sciences, nursing and health sciences, and athletics. We are proud to be winners of the 2015 Innovation Award for CSin3 –a Computer Science collaboration with CSU Monterey Bay that leads to a bachelor's degree in three years. **We are growing leaders through opportunity, engagement and achievement.** For more about Hartnell CCD, visit [www.hartnell.edu](http://www.hartnell.edu).

### ### ###