



**PRESS RELEASE
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**PARADISE BLUE STARTS PERFORMANCES AT AURORA THEATRE
COMPANY JANUARY 27th
BY DOMINIQUE MORISSEAU**

BERKELEY, CA (December 13 , 2022) Aurora Theatre Company's second play in their 31st season is Dominique Morisseau's *Paradise Blue*. The show will be directed by Aurora Theatre Company's Associate Artistic Director, Dawn Monique Williams.

PARADISE BLUE will be presented in-person on Aurora's mainstage from **January 27 - February 26 (Opens: February 2nd)**.

Inspired by August Wilson's *Century Cycle*, Dominique Morisseau has written three plays she calls her Detroit Trilogy: *Paradise Blue*, *Detroit '67*, and *Skeleton Crew*. All have been produced off-Broadway and around the country. Aurora produced a successful run of Morisseau's *Detroit '67* in their 2018/2019 Season.

"Suspenseful noir and Detroit history converge in Dominique Morisseau's 'Paradise Blue'... Morisseau is extremely skillful in creating a fertile theatrical landscape" — *Los Angeles Times*

"It's Finally Oakland director Dawn Monique Williams' moment, and it's about time" — *Lily Janiak - San Francisco Chronicle Theatre Critic*

"Morisseau is for Detroit what August Wilson is for Pittsburgh's Hill—a new griot, a culture bearer. Her Detroit Project is steeped in the rich and complex history of Black and African Americans, and the specificity of the storytelling located in her native Detroit resonates with so

many folks from similar urban environments across the U.S.–like me, having grown up in Oakland,” said Aurora Theatre’s Associate Artistic Director and the director of the play, Dawn Monique Williams. “Morisseau is one of today’s most gifted writers and it is a point of pride for me that Aurora is producing a second play in this trilogy.”

PARADISE BLUE is a jazz-infused drama in which we meet Blue, a gifted trumpeter, who contemplates selling his once-vibrant nightclub in Detroit’s Blackbottom neighborhood. Set in 1949 against a backdrop of urban renewal, Morisseau investigates the challenges of building a better future on the foundation left behind. If Blue sells, where does that leave his devoted Pumpkin, who has dreams of her own? And what does this mean for the club’s house band? When Silver, a mysterious woman with a walk that drives men mad, comes to town with her own plans, everyone’s world is turned upside down.

Post Show Discussions

Please join us for a discussion of Aurora Theatre Company's production of **PARADISE BLUE** by Dominique Morisseau, hosted after select shows on the days listed below, including our affinity night for people of the African Diaspora on February 10. Discussion host and director Dawn Monique Williams may be joined by the actors, community members, and local storytellers.

Friday, February 3

Tuesday, February 7

Friday, February 10

Wednesday, February 15

Thursday, February 23

Creative Team for PARADISE BLUE

Dominique Morisseau (she/her)

Dominique Morisseau is the author of *The Detroit Project* (a 3-Play Cycle) which includes the following plays: *Skeleton Crew* (Atlantic Theater Company), *Paradise Blue* (Signature Theatre), and *Detroit '67* (Public Theater, Classical Theatre of Harlem and NBT). Additional plays include: *Pipeline* (Lincoln Center Theatre), *Sunset Baby* (LAByrinth Theatre); *Blood at the Root* (National Black Theatre) and *Follow Me To Nellie's* (Premiere Stages). She is also the TONY nominated book writer on the new Broadway musical *Ain't Too Proud – The Life and Times of the Temptations* (Imperial Theatre).

Dominique is an alumna of The Public Theater Emerging Writers Group, Women’s Project Lab, and Lark Playwrights Workshop and has developed work at Sundance Lab, Williamstown Theatre Festival and Eugene O'Neill Playwrights Conference. She most recently served as Co-Producer on the Showtime series “*Shameless*” (3 seasons). Additional awards include: Spirit of Detroit Award, PoNY Fellowship, Sky-Cooper Prize, TEER Trailblazer Award, Steinberg Playwright Award, Audelco Awards, NBFT

August Wilson Playwriting Award, Edward M. Kennedy Prize for Drama, OBIE Award (2), Ford Foundation Art of Change Fellowship, Variety's Women of Impact for 2017-18, and a recent MacArthur Genius Grant Fellow.

Dawn Monique Williams (she/her) Director

Dawn Monique Williams, associate artistic director, joined the Aurora team in August 2019. A native of Oakland, CA, Dawn was previously the Artistic Associate at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Recent directing credits include the world premieres of Marcus Gardley's *Lear* (Cal Shakes) and *The Incrementalist* by Cleavon Smith (Aurora); August Wilson's *Two Trains Running* (Marin Theatre Company), *Une Tempete* by Aimé Césaire (American Shakespeare Center), *Beehive: The 60's Musical* (CenterREP), Lauren Gunderson's *The Half-Life Of Marie Curie* (TheatreSquared), *Sweet Water Taste* (Orlando Shakespeare Theatre), *Letters To Kamala* (American Stage Company), *Earthrise* (Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts), *The Merry Wives Of Windsor* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival), *Bull In A China Shop* (Aurora), *The Secretaries* (Profile Theatre), *Romeo & Juliet* (Chautauqua Theatre), August Wilson's *The Piano Lesson* (Le Petit), Lynn Nottage's *By The Way, Meet Vera Stark* (Douglas Morrisson and UNCO), and *Women On The Verge Of A Nervous Breakdown* (Town Hall); audio versions of Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* adapted by Lydia R. Diamond (Aurora) and Lynn Nottage's *Las Meninas* (Profile Theatre).

Dawn's awards include the New York Stage and Film 2022 Pfaelzer Award, a Princess Grace Theatre Fellowship, a TCG Leadership U Residency Grant, and a Drama League Directing Fellowship. She holds an MA in Dramatic Literature and an MFA in Directing. Dawn is a proud member of SDC.

Recently featured in the San Francisco Chronicle by theatre critic Lily Janiak, Williams' work was highlighted for her Shakespearean credentials, passion for diversifying the artists and stories told in American theatre, and recent directorial projects throughout the Bay Area: *Lear*, with sold out performances at Cal Shakes last summer; August Wilson's *Two Trains Running* at Marin Theatre Company, and Dominique Morisseau's *Paradise Blue* at Aurora Theatre beginning January 27th.

The creative team for **PARADISE BLUE** includes **Stephen C. Jones** --Scenic; **Stephanie Johnson**--Lighting; **Maggie Morgan**--Costumes; **Cliff Caruthers**--Sound; **Gregory Robinson**--Composition; **Alicia Lerner**--Stage Manager; **Lauren Chang**--Assistant Stage Manager

CALENDAR EDITORS

Aurora will also offer a week of streaming **PARADISE BLUE** performances for audiences to enjoy in their homes. Streaming performances will run concurrently with in-person performances, from **February 21 - February 26**. Aurora is hosting its first African Diaspora Affinity Night on Friday, February 10 with a pre-show reception and post show discussion. All are welcome (as always) for this special night.

DATES

Previews: Friday 1/27 and Saturday 1/28 at 8 p.m.

Sunday, 1/29 at 2 p.m.

Tuesday and Wednesday, 1/31 & 2/1 at 7 p.m.

Open: Thursday, February 2, 2023

Close: Sunday, February 26, 2 p.m.

Shows: IN-PERSON PERFORMANCES (Jan. 27 - Feb. 26):

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

STREAMING PERFORMANCES (February 21 - February 26).

A filmed performance 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-\$75) or subscriptions (\$200-\$385), the public can
call (510) 843-4822 or visit www.auroratheatre.org.

PHOTOS

<https://www.auroratheatre.org/index.php/press-room>

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. It has an operating budget of \$2.3 million.

Aurora Theatre Company gratefully acknowledges Executive Season Sponsors: Craig & Kathy Moody. Sponsors: Amy & Tom Worth. Associate Sponsors: Rosalind & Sung-Hou Kim, Ellen & Barry Levine.

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