

Theatre Rhinoceros Presents

# How Black Mothers Say I Love You

Written by  
Trey Anthony

Directed by  
Tanika Baptiste



March 17 – April 3, 2022

tickets: [theRhino.org](http://theRhino.org)

Theatre Rhinoceros • 4229 18th Street, San Francisco, in The Castro

## **Production Notes**

### **From the Artistic Director**

Trey Anthony's play speaks to the challenges of being a queer child and of being a mother. Accepting a lesbian daughter is almost as difficult as being one. And those of us who have mothers, and who doesn't, see that a mother's struggle is genuine even if it is painful for us. Anthony has written a play of genuine understanding and acceptance for all parties, and as tough as it is to watch sometimes for all the internecine turbulence, it documents a difficult journey that actually leads somewhere. It is a mistake to assume that the battles for acceptance are won. They are not, neither on the personal nor the political levels. But this magical play at least acknowledge that the battles can bring about positive change, and that proximity, while painful sometimes, can engender empathy. I hope you enjoy our production.

John Fisher

### **From the Director**

Once I read *How Black Mothers Say I Love You* I knew I HAD to be a part of the manifestation of this project. Trey Anthony weaves together a piece loosely rooted in her own families' biography while offering an intimate exposé of the Black immigrant experience. Love is a word and also an action. Black mothers parent in their own individual style and grace yet there is a universality to the way Black children are loved. Our mothers show us love through the meals they provide each day. The combing of our hair. Their prayers over us as we sleep. The labor pains they muscled through to bring us earth side. The discipline we receive. The sacrifices they make so that their children can have better than they. Actions speak louder than words, but words still matter. Thank you Theatre Rhino, cast and company of this brilliant piece of theatre. Thank you Black Mothers for doing your best! We love and appreciate you and we all can do better by you.

How do Black Mothers Say I Love You? They just do it.

Enjoy the show and call your Grandma.

Tanika Baptiste

**Tom Horn and the Bob A. Ross Foundation  
present  
*HOW BLACK MOTHERS SAY I LOVE YOU*  
By Trey Anthony  
Directed by Tanika Baptiste**

Stage Manager ..... Isaac Traister  
Lighting Installation/Design..... Colin Johnson  
Scenic Design..... Seafus Chatmon-Smith  
Costume Design ..... Daria Perkova  
Sound Design..... Wesley Murphy  
Scenic Construction..... Sebastian Attardo  
Brochure/Graphics/Ads..... Christine U'Ren  
Promo Photography ..... Vince Thomas  
Box Office/Program..... Joe Tally  
Theatre Design ..... Joe Tally  
Theatre Installation ..... Sebastian Attardo, Joe Tally  
Web..... Samantha Lomax  
Lighting Equipment..... Eric Johnson, Craig Souza  
Scenic Painter Volunteer..... Sofian Sadaah

Special thanks to Aviva Kanoff, Marin Theatre Company, Shin Aoki, Sagrada Sacred Arts and Stephanie Niemann.

Very special thanks to Eric Johnson and Craig Souza for making the lighting possible with a generous donation of equipment, delivery, and advice.

A very, very special thanks to Ira and Tony for their hospitality. Again! You guys are still the best!

*How Black Mothers Say I Love You* is approximately ninety minutes in length and is performed without intermission.

First Theatre Rhinoceros Performance: Thursday, March 17, 2022.

*How Black Mothers Say I Love You* is presented by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc.

Theatre Rhinoceros' production of *How Black Mothers Say I Love You* is made possible by generous donations from Tom Horn and The Bob A. Ross Foundation.

## Cast

CARLA BANU DEJESUS "DAPHNEY"

MONIQUE HIGHTOWER-GASKIN "CLOE"

ELIZABETH JONES "CLAUDETTE"

KELDAMUSIK "VALERIE"

## Time - Now

### Place - Daphne's house in Brooklyn

#### Theatre Rhinoceros

John Fisher (Executive Artistic Director), Joe Tally (Development Director/Company Manager), Samantha Lomax (Web)

#### Board of Directors, Theatre Rhinoceros

Cath Brannigan, Laurence Dillon, Josh Dunsby (President), SuzyJane Edwards, Kim Larsen (Vice-President/Development Chair), Jeremy Laurin (Finance Chair), Ely Orquiza, Craig Souza (Secretary)

## Who's Who

**Trey Anthony** (Playwright) is a visionary creator who uses a unique blend of comedy, theatre, motivational talk, and her own life experiences to inspire and lift-up others. She is a professional speaker, lifestyle coach, producer, author, and award-winning playwright, but she's also "your girl" who tells it how it is. Through art, humor and the power of a clear message, she's here to give Black women the non-nonsense tools to take controls of their lives and thrive!

**Tanika Baptiste** (Director) is honored to once again collaborate with Theatre Rhino in her fourth directorial role. Named the San Francisco *Broadway World* "Person to Watch Female 2020," Tanika is originally from San Diego, CA and has worked as a director, producer, actor, playwright and vocalist in both the San Francisco Bay Area and SD. Her most recent Bay Area credits include *Pass Over* - Assistant Director/ASM/Fight Captain (Marin Theatre Company), *At the Wake of a Dead Drag Queen*, *The Review or How to Eat Your Opposition* (both at Theatre Rhino) and *Rachel* (SBMT.) San Diego credits: *Clybourne Park* (Character Physics,) *The deSTROYers* (Old Globe Theatre-Powers New Voices Festival,) and *Fires in the Mirror*, which received the *Broadway World* Award San Diego 2021 for Best Streaming Play (Trinity Theatre Company.) She has performed and/or directed with Marin Theatre Company, La Jolla Playhouse, San Diego REP, Berkeley Repertory Theatre's Ground Floor, Marin Shakespeare Company, The Old Globe, American Conservatory Theatre, Lorraine Hansberry Theatre and Diversionary

Theatre. Thank you Theatre Rhino and our wonderful audience. Love to our wonderful production team, cast, and family. You all inspire me and I'm grateful to you!

**Seafus Chatmon-Smith (Scenic Designer)** is a recipient of San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics' Circle "Excellence in Theatre" award for his 2019 scenic design of *Admissions* for Los Altos Stage Company. Some of his designs include Las Positas College's 2006 production of *Macbeth* (Sound Designer), Bay Area Children's Theatre's *Fancy Nancy Splendiferous Christmas* - 2016 (Sound Designer), *James and the Giant Peach JR* – 2017 (Music Director), *Junie B Jones JR* - 2018 (Music Director), Dragon Theatre's *Equivocation - 2018* (Scenic Designer), Lohman Theatre's *She Kills Monsters - 2018* (Scenic Designer), Los Positas College's *Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Odd Stupid Tales - 2019* (Scenic Designer).

**Carla BaNu Dejesus** (Daphne) is a bi-coastal performer extraordinaire whose talents and gifts include but are not limited to: Actor, Spoken Word Artist, Poet, Choreographer, Director, Creative Producer, and Teaching Artist. Carla was most recently awarded San Diego *Broadway World's* Best Performer in A Streaming Play 2020, for a production presented by Trinity Theater, which was also voted Best Streaming Play 2020. Current and most recent collaborations include: Theater Rhinoceros in San Francisco (Daphne/Actor), San Diego Rep (**Mel/Actor**), Old Globe Theater/SoulKiss Theater (Ruth Ellis/Actor) La Jolla Playhouse (Choreographer), Black Artist Collective (Choreographer In Residence,) *Hear Her Roar!* and *Hear Her Roar Even Louder!* (Creative Producer.)

Eleven-year-old **Monique Hightower-Gaskin** (Chloe) is a classically trained music theater actress. She has worked with the American Conservatory Theater, Black Repertory Theater, and French Woods Performing Arts Camp. Monique has performed in roles ranging from Charlotte Le Bouff in *Princess & Frog*, to a young Aretha Franklin in *We Will Rock You*, to starring in *Hercules*. She is fluent in French and has been studying the language since the age of two. Monique is also a competitive swimmer, skilled dancer, and singer, and has a love of travel. She has visited thirty-nine of the United States and the Eiffel Tower in Paris. Monique is looking forward to starring in *The Wizard of Oz* this summer at French Woods in New York.

**Colin Johnson** (Lighting Installation/Lighting Design) returns to The Rhino having stage managed, assistant directed and designed for many Rhino productions including *Shakespeare Goes to War*, *Breaking the Code* and *At the Wake of a Dead Drag Queen*. He is employed by SOMAart and Safe House, and works at A.C.T. and theatres across the city.

**Elizabeth Jones** (Claudette) is excited to be making her debut with Theatre Rhinoceros! What a privilege it is to bring this multifaceted and incredibly heartfelt story of Black Mothers and Daughters to the stage. I am incredibly humbled and honored to embody Claudette. Elizabeth grew up in the Bay Area and is a graduate of Howard University with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Theatre Arts. Elizabeth was recently seen as Nancy/Boz in *A Christmas Carol* (Center REP), Radio in *Caroline or Change* (Ray of Light), and Motormouth Maybelle in Bay Area Musical's production of *Hairspray*. Some other

theatre credits include Lady O in *The Right Note* (Spare Stage), Darlene in *Dance of The Holy Ghosts* (Ubuntu Theater Project), Deloris Van Cartier in *Sister Act!* (Berkeley Playhouse), and Ronnette in *Little Shop of Horrors* (Contra Costa Musical Theatre). Elizabeth sends love to her daughter Caira and thanks God, family, and friends for their support. Follow Elizabeth on instagram @elizasenoj.

**Wesley Allen Murphy** (Sound/Video Design) is excited to be working on his third show with Theatre Rhinoceros. He worked previously on designing sound and video for *The Review* and *Pillow Talk*. Wesley is a professional multi-instrumentalist who has played in various bands in Northern California specializing in 5-string banjo and bass guitar. In 2014 he went on a national tour with singer-songwriter Brianna Lea Pruett. He has recorded at Bob Weir's TRI Studios in San Rafael, Canyon Records in Arizona, and Daytrotter Studios in Chicago. Wesley has been nominated for two Elly awards, including Sound Design for his original score for Folsom Lake College's *Alice in Wonderland*.

**Daria Perkova** (Costume Design) is a Bay Area native costume designer. This is her first time working with The Rhino, but she has designed, stitched, and run wardrobe for many theaters around the Bay. Her most recent works include costume design for Anton Chekov's *Uncle Vanya* at Chabot College and running the costume shop and wardrobe crew at Marin Theatre Company for Antoinette Nwandu's *Pass Over*.

**Kelda Williams** (Valerie) known professionally as Keldamuzik aka Diva, is an American music artist, actress, TV host, and producer. Born in the Bay Area, she is known for her hit singles "Queen For A Night" and "Thirsty." which are both on her fourth studio album, *Diva TV* (2010). Kelda recorded her first Hip Hop album in 2005. She has professionally released four Hip Hop albums under Loud Dust Recordings, Malaco Music, DSN and AMAdea Music. Her career took off after her first break when she received a licensing opportunity for Sony Entertainment's film *Please Give*; to follow up she then joined R&B singer Lloyd on a tour of Japan and Reggae singer Jah Cure in the Caribbean performing at one of the biggest stadiums in Antigua. Her song "Thirsty" hit number 4 on KISS FM in Australia. With regards to more song placements, her first single "I Don't Care" from the *Diva TV Album*, was played on Bravo TV's *Atlanta Housewives* in 2020. Kelda's video "Magic" hit the airwaves in 2020, showcasing her versatility in music, singing, and creating a fun love song produced by Robot Millenium and written by Mrs. Thesis. Kelda produced her very first film "Love the Original Way," that screened at the Black Hollywood Film Festival. Her TV project *Diva Talk Tonite*, was an entertainment talk show interviewing local guests of all backgrounds. The show stemmed from her original reality TV series *Diva TV* which was a huge indie hit on local access stations in several Bay Area counties.

**Isaac Traister** (Stage Manager) is thrilled to be returning to live theater with Theater Rhino. Previously he stage managed *The Normal Heart*, *Transitions*, *DareBnB* and *Sister Act* with Rhino, and has also stage managed several shows at City College of San Francisco and assistant stage managed *Violet* and *Gypsy* with Bay Area Musicals. Isaac has also worked backstage with various companies throughout the Bay Area.



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