



AHMANSON THEATRE
MARK TAPER FORUM
KIRK DOUGLAS THEATRE

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For immediate release.

**REHEARSALS HAVE BEGUN FOR “SCHOOL GIRLS; OR, THE AFRICAN MEAN GIRLS PLAY”
AT CENTER THEATRE GROUP’S KIRK DOUGLAS THEATRE
Jocelyn Bioh’s Acclaimed New Play Will Run September 2 Through 30, 2018**

Rehearsals have begun for the hit MCC Theater production of “School Girls; Or, the African Mean Girls Play” by Jocelyn Bioh. Directed by Rebecca Taichman, the production will begin previews September 2, open September 8 and continue through September 30, 2018, at Center Theatre Group’s Kirk Douglas Theatre.

Following the Los Angeles run at the Kirk Douglas Theatre, the MCC production of “School Girls” will have an encore run at the Lucille Lortel Theatre in New York from October 16 through November 25, 2018.

The cast for “School Girls” includes, in alphabetical order, **MaameYaa Bofo, Latoya Edwards, Paige Gilbert, Joanna A. Jones, Abena Mensah-Bonsu, Mirirai Sithole** and **Myra Lucretia Taylor**. Due to scheduling conflicts, Zainab Jah will no longer be part of this production. **Zenzi Williams** will now play the role of Eloise Amponsah.

The creative team includes set design by **Arnulfo Maldonado**, costume design by **Dede Ayite**, lighting design by **Jen Schriever**, sound design by **Palmer Hefferan**, dialect coaching by **Deborah Hecht** and casting by **Telsey + Company/Adam Caldwell, CSA, William Cantler, CSA, Karyn Casl, CSA. Laura Wilson** is the production stage manager and **Ayisha Hunt** is the stage manager.

Paulina, the reigning queen bee at Ghana’s most exclusive boarding school, has her sights set on the Miss Universe pageant. But the arrival of Ericka, a new student with undeniable talent and beauty, captures the attention of the pageant recruiter—and Paulina’s hive-minded friends. Jocelyn Bioh’s buoyant and biting comedy explores the universal similarities (and glaring differences) facing teenage girls across the globe.

Jesse Green of The New York Times said, “The nasty-teen comedy genre emerges wonderfully refreshed and even deepened by its immersion in a world it never considered.” The New Yorker’s Hilton Als called Jocelyn Bioh “a latter-day Restoration comedian,” adding “‘School Girls’ comments on the times—in this case, on our fascinating era, in which so much debate centers on the body, especially the female body.” And, in his review in The Hollywood Reporter, Frank Scheck concluded, “‘School Girls; Or, the African Mean Girls Play’ is a ferociously entertaining morality tale that proves as heartwarming as it is hilarious.”

“School Girls; Or, the African Mean Girls Play” had its world-premiere at MCC on November 2, 2017. The 2017-2018 award season garnered four Lucille Lortel Award nominations including wins for Outstanding Play, Outstanding Featured Actress in a Play for Mirirai Sithole, and Outstanding Costume Design for Dede Ayite. It also received a 2018 Drama

Desk Special Award for Ensemble, the Outer Critics Circle John Gassner Award for Playwright, the Dramatists Guild Hull-Warriner Award and nominations for Best Play by The Drama League and from the Off Broadway Alliance.

Jocelyn Bioh is a Ghanaian-American writer and performer. NYC acting credits include “In the Blood” (Signature Theatre, Drama Desk Nomination), “Everybody” (Signature Theatre, Lortel nomination), “Men On Boats” (Playwrights Horizons), “An Octoroon” (Soho Rep), “Neighbors” (The Public) and “The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time” (2015 Tony Award for Best Play). Her plays include 2015 Kilroys’ List selection “Nollywood Dreams” (part of 2017 The Cherry Lane Mentor Project), “School Girls; Or, the African Mean Girls Play” (2017/18 MCC Theater, Lortel Award, OCC John Gassner Award, Hull-Warriner Award, Drama Desk Nomination, Drama League Nomination, Off-Broadway Alliance Nomination, Kilroys’ List 2016), “African Americans” (2011 Ruby Prize Finalist), “Goddess” (book writer) and “The Ladykiller’s Love Story” of which she conceived the story and wrote the libretto with music/lyrics by CeeLo Green. She is a commissioned playwright with Manhattan Theatre Club, Atlantic Theater Company, Williamstown Theatre Festival and Second Stage Theater. She is a resident playwright at Lincoln Center and is a 2017-18 Tow Foundation Playwright-in-Residence with MCC Theater. She has a BA in English and Theatre from Ohio State University and an MFA in Playwriting.

Center Theatre Group, one of the nation’s preeminent arts and cultural organizations, is Los Angeles’ leading nonprofit theatre company, which, under Artistic Director Michael Ritchie, programs seasons at the 736-seat Mark Taper Forum and 1600 to 2000-seat Ahmanson Theatre at The Music Center in Downtown Los Angeles, and the 317-seat Kirk Douglas Theatre in Culver City. In addition to presenting and producing the broadest range of theatrical entertainment in the country, Center Theatre Group is one of the nation’s leading producers of ambitious new works through commissions and world premiere productions and a leader in interactive community engagement and education programs that reach across generations, demographics and circumstance to serve Los Angeles.

Tickets for “School Girls; Or, the African Mean Girls Play” are available by calling (213) 628-2772, online at www.CenterTheatreGroup.org, at the Center Theatre Group Box Office at the Ahmanson Theatre or at the Kirk Douglas Theatre Box Office two hours prior to performance. Tickets range from \$25 – \$72 (ticket prices are subject to change). The Kirk Douglas Theatre is located at 9820 Washington Blvd. in Culver City, CA 90232. Free three hour covered parking at City Hall with validation (available in the Kirk Douglas Theatre lobby).

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August 17, 2018