



## **McCarter Theatre Center appoints Nicole A. Watson Associate Artistic Director**

### **New position supported by major grant from BOLD Theater Women's Leadership Circle**

(Princeton, NJ — Oct 5, 2020) — McCarter Theatre Center today announced the appointment of **Nicole A. Watson** as Associate Artistic Director. She comes to McCarter from Round House Theatre, one of the leading professional theaters in the Washington, DC, area where she has served as associate artistic director since 2017.

Born in Jamaica and raised in New York, Watson began her career as a history teacher and started directing in 2008. She has directed at the New Black Fest, the Women's Project Theater, Washington National Opera, Baltimore Center Stage, Geva Theater, Asolo Repertory Theater, Playmakers Rep, A.C.T.'s Conservatory, North Carolina School of the Arts, New Dramatists, and The 52nd Street Project.

Watson has served as assistant director to Bill Rauch at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and Seattle Rep, Ruben Santiago-Hudson at Signature Theater, and Joe Haj at the Guthrie Theater. She is a 2013 Drama League Directing Fellow and the 2011 recipient of the League of Professional Theatre Women's Josephine Abady Award. She earned a bachelor's degree in history from Yale University and her master's from NYU's Gallatin School of Individualized Study.

"I have admired Nicole's curiosity and intellect ever since we met ten years ago in the Women's Project Directors Lab," said Artistic Director Sarah Rasmussen. "Not only is she a fantastic director but she is also a brilliant scholar and teacher. I can't imagine a better fit for McCarter, an institution that celebrates the intersection of art and scholarship."

Watson's position is supported by a major grant from the BOLD Theater Women's Leadership Circle, awarded to Rasmussen in September 2020. The grant is focused on advancing the leadership of women artistic directors in professional theaters across the United States.

"The BOLD Circle is transforming American theater by directly supporting female-identified leaders and creators," said Rasmussen. "So often men are hired on potential but women on experience. I deeply admire the way BOLD is addressing that inequity with funding and mentorship for an incredible group of artists and leaders."

Watson says that she and Rasmussen have long talked about working together. "When Sarah called with the invitation to join her at McCarter, it was an invitation I immediately knew I wanted to accept," she said. "Plus, one of my first jobs was teaching at McCarter so it's exciting to return to this wonderful place to work with a visionary leader."

In her new senior leadership position, Watson will oversee McCarter's four-week festival celebrating the work of playwright and experimentalist Adrienne Kennedy. The festival is a partnership with Round House Theatre. Four of Kennedy's plays will be released virtually every week beginning November 14.

“Adrienne Kennedy is a prolific yet rarely produced living playwright,” Watson said. “Her work is dreamlike and surreal, yet deeply rooted in reality. I look forward to re-introducing this incredible and singular artist to a wider audience.”

For more information about the festival — entitled “[The Work of Adrienne Kennedy: Inspiration & Influence](#)” — visit [mccarter.org](http://mccarter.org).

To download a photo of Nicole A. Watson and logos for the Bold Foundation and “The Work of Adrienne Kennedy: Inspiration & Influence”, please visit <https://we.tl/t-SxPnkjzxLO>.

For more information, contact Debbie Bisno, [dbisno@mccarter.org](mailto:dbisno@mccarter.org).

### **ABOUT NICOLE A. WATSON**

Jamaican by birth. New Yorker by choice. Nicole A. Watson is a director and educator with an interest in new play development and plays that deal with the past. A former history teacher, Nicole started directing in 2008 and works in NYC as well as universities and theaters throughout the US. Most recently she served as Associate Artistic Director at Round House Theatre.

Nicole is a member of the New Georges Jam and has worked with New Dramatists, the Lark Play Development Center, the Fire this Time Festival, the New Black Fest, the Women's Project Theater, The 52nd Street Project, Signature Theater, and Working Theater.

Credits include Jocelyn Bioh’s *School Girls; or, the African Mean Girls Play* (which won the Helen Hayes “best ensemble” award), Eleanor Burgess’ *The Niceties*, Lucas Hnath’s *A Doll’s House Part 2*, Lynn Nottage’s *Sweat*, Robert Schenkkan’s *The Great Society*, the world premiere of Kevin R. Free’s *Night of the Living N-Word* (NY Fringe Festival), a workshop of Lenelle Moïses *Merit* (New Black Fest), Katori Hall’s *The Mountaintop*, the world premiere of the opera *Approaching Ali*, (Washington National Opera at the Kennedy Center), the world premiere of Johnna Adams’ *World Builders* at the Contemporary American Theater Festival, Eboni Hogan’s *Foreign Bodies* (2013 Poetic License Festival/2012 Women’s Center Stage), *We Play For the Gods* (Women’s Project), *BlindSight: A Melodic Hypothesis* (an original work for the Women Center Stage Festival), and Daniel McCoy’s *Eli and Cheryl Jump* (NY Fringe Festival).

She has been a guest director at A.C.T.’s Conservatory (*Las Meninas*), Smith College (*Our Lady of Kibeho*), North Carolina School of the Arts (*The Piano Lesson*, *Joe Turner’s Come and Gone*), NYU (*Born Bad*, *Milk Like Sugar*, *Ti-Jean and His Brothers*), and Long Island University (*Twelfth Night*). She also adapted and directed Shakespeare’s *The Merry Wives of Windsor* for Two River Theater’s Little Shakespeare).

Nicole assisted Bill Rauch on the Oregon Shakespeare Festival/Seattle Rep premiere of *The Great Society* and was the assistant director on August Wilson’s *The Piano Lesson* at the Signature Theater directed by Ruben Santiago-Hudson. In 2013, she served as an assistant director and production associate on the August Wilson Century Cycle for WNYC Radio.

Nicole has also had the pleasure to assist Joe Haj, Dominique Serrand, Joanna Settle, Giovanna Sardelli, Kwame Kwei-Armah, and André DeShields. She is a long-time volunteer at the 52nd Street Project where she directed *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* with their teen ensemble. She was a 2015 Artist in Residence at the

Drama League where she developed *We Sat in the Death House*, a devised movement piece with MJ Kaufman.

Nicole is a 2013 Drama League Directing Fellow and the 2011 recipient of the League of Professional Theatre Women's Josephine Abady Award. Nicole was an invited artist at the 2011 Voice and Visions Retreat where she worked with playwright Dominique Morisseau on *Paradise Blue*. She is a co-founder of the Working Theater Directors Salon which she produced for 5 years working with directors Luke, Harlan, Rebecca Martinez, and Dina Vovsi.

Nicole has been a teaching artist at the McCarter Theatre, the Tribeca Film Institute, the New York Historical Society and the Museum of the City of New York, where she has both taught and developed curriculum for their programs. Nicole is an alum of both the Lincoln Center Directors Lab and the Women's Project Directors Lab and a member of the SDC. She also serves on the Drama League Board.

Nicole earned a bachelor's degree in history from Yale University and her master's from NYU Gallatin School of Individualized Study. She lives in Princeton with her husband, playwright Tim J. Lord, and their dog, Henry.

#### **ABOUT MCCARTER THEATRE CENTER**

Under the leadership of award-winning Artistic Director Sarah Rasmussen and Managing Director Michael S. Rosenberg, McCarter's mission is to create worldclass theater and present the finest artists for the community engagement, education, and entertainment. Winner of the 1994 Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre, world premieres include Christopher Durang's *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike* (2013 Tony, Best Play); Tarell Alvin McCarey's *The Brother/Sister Plays*, Emily Mann's *Having Our Say*, and Danai Gurira's *The Convert*. Due to COVID-19, McCarter has pivoted to offer virtual programming including [McCarter@HOME](#) and [McCarter Online Classes](#), reaching new audiences across the world. More at [www.mccarter.org](http://www.mccarter.org).

# # #