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NEW CONSERVATORY THEATRE CENTER

In Association with AfroSolo Arts Festival Presents

The World Premiere of

Waiting for Giovanni

A dream play by Jewelle Gomez

In collaboration with Harry Waters Jr.

San Francisco, June 10, 2011, — **NCTC** is proud to present the world premiere of ***Waiting for Giovanni*** written by renowned author Jewelle Gomez in collaboration with and directed by Harry Waters Jr. The show is the first of NCTC's 17th Pride Season and will be running from August 27th – September 18th, 2011: Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday at 8pm and Sunday at 2pm. All performances will take place at The New Conservatory Theatre Center, (Decker Theatre), located at 25 Van Ness Ave. near Market St. in San Francisco, 94102. Tickets range from \$24 - \$40, and are available at the NCTC Box Office at (415) 861-8972, or online at www.nctcsf.org.

ABOUT THE SHOW

The year is 1956. A young black writer from the stoops of Harlem has become a literary success. He has a social circle that praises him, a profession that he loves, and an eager line of lovers. While writing his second novel however, Jimmy encounters hostility not only from his community of activists and writers, but from his white editor William. William warns Jimmy that the novel, filled with sensual homosexual content, will end his hard earned career. While Jimmy struggles with his peers, he also finds himself in conflict with Giovanni, the embodiment of his desire. Based on a split second of indecision in the mind of world renown author James Baldwin, *Waiting for Giovanni* explores the emotional and professional dilemmas that loom over this fierce Harlem man - a man who insists on being true to love, to politics, and to the ghosts that live in his head.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND COLLABORATOR

Jewelle Gomez is the recipient of a literature fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts; two California Arts Council fellowships and an Individual Artist Commission from the San Francisco Arts Commission. Her fiction, essays, criticism, and poetry have appeared in numerous periodicals such as *The San Francisco Chronicle*, *The New York Times*, *The Village Voice*, *Ms Magazine*, *Essence Magazine*, *The Advocate*, *Callaloo*, and *Black Scholar*. Jewelle's work has appeared in such anthologies as *Home Girls*, *Reading Black Reading Feminist*, *Dark Matter*, and the *Oxford World Treasury of Love Stories*. Her first novel, *The Gilda Stories*, celebrates its 20th year in print in 2011 with readings at the Museum of the African Diaspora and at the Queer Arts Festival. Jewelle has also written three collections of poetry, a fantasy fiction anthology, and has selected fiction for the *Best of Lesbian Erotica of 1997*.

In addition to her writing, Ms. Gomez was on the original staffs of *Say Brother*, one of the first weekly Black television shows in the U.S. (WGBH-TV, Boston) and *The Electric Company* (Children's Television Workshop, NYC) as well as and on the founding board of the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD). She was an original member of the boards of the Astraea Foundation and the Open Meadows Foundation and has served on literature panels for the National Endowment for the Arts, the Illinois Arts Council, and the California Arts Council.

Harry Waters Jr. is an esteemed actor, director and teacher. He created the role of Belize in the first production of *Angels in America: A Gay Fantasia on National Themes* in 1991. Waters is most famous for his portrayal of Marvin Berry in *Back to the Future* (1985) which earned him a gold record for his rendition of "Earth Angel". Acting Credits also include *Disney's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Big Bully* starring Rick Moranis, as well as the television series *MASH* and *227*. Mr. Waters is the former creative director of the San Diego Junior Theatre and is a graduate of Princeton University and University of Wisconsin. He has worked as an actor in New York City on and off Broadway for more than a decade as well as in theatres around the country including the Mark Taper Forum, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, TheatreWorks, and the San Jose Repertory Theatre.

Waters and Jewelle Gomez met as members of the Frank Silvera Writers Workshop in Harlem which has been developing the work of new playwrights, directors, designers, and actors since 1973. Mr. Waters is currently a professor in the Department of Theatre and Dance at Macalester College in Minneapolis and has taught acting, and script development. Waters has also directed numerous productions around the country including the recent revival of the ground breaking piece by Pomo Afro Homo, *Fierce Love*.

ABOUT AFROSOLO

AfroSolo Theatre Company's mission is to nurture, promote, and present African American and African Diaspora art and culture through solo performances and the visual arts. Since 1993, AfroSolo has provided a forum to give an authentic voice to the diverse experiences of Black people in the Americas. Through art, AfroSolo brings people of different ethnicities together to explore and share the human spirit that binds us all. This year AfroSolo will present its 17th annual AfroSolo Arts Festival, celebrating African American artists giving voice to the Black experience. 2011's theme, UNITED IN PEACE: Artists, Clergy, Legislators, and Community, promotes the power of peace through live performances, the visual arts, and other events to envision and celebrate peace. This year's festival not only pays homage to and explores the rich legacy of African Americans and people of African decent, but also focuses on a coming together of all people for the common purpose of peace. Festival events (July 29-October 15) featuring a

panel discussion, live music, visual art, and works for the stage will take place in San Francisco at Yerba Buena Gardens, the Main San Francisco Public Library, the African American Art and Culture Complex, and the Ella Hill Hutch Community Center. Most events are free and open to the public.

SUPPORTERS

This production supported in part by The Kenneth Rainin Foundation, Grants for the Arts, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, San Francisco Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts.

CALENDAR LISTING: THEATRE

SHOW: NCTC presents *Waiting for Giovanni* by Jewelle Gomez in collaboration with and directed by Harry Waters Jr.

WHEN: The show opens on August 27th, 2011 and runs through September 18th, 2011: Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday at 8pm and Sunday at 2pm.

WHERE: **New Conservatory Theatre Center** (Decker Theatre) located at 25 Van Ness Ave. at Market St. in San Francisco, 94102.

TICKETS: Range from \$24 - \$40, and are available at NCTC's Box Office at (415) 861 8972, or online at www.nctcsf.org.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE PRODUCTION:

Jewelle Gomez:

<http://jewellegomez.com/>

<http://waiting4giovanni.blogspot.com>

AfroSolo:

<http://www.afrosolo.org/>

The New Conservatory Theatre:

<http://nctcsf.org/>