FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 15, 2020


Writers Theatre continues 2019/20 Season with

Stick Fly

Written by Lydia R. Diamond
Directed by Writers Theatre Resident Director Ron OJ Parson
Featuring David Alan Anderson, Ayanna Bria Bakari, Eric Gerard, DiMonte Henning, Kayla Raelle Holder and Jennifer Latimore

February 5, 2020 – March 15, 2020

Sibling rivalries and parental expectations come to a head as family secrets emerge during a weekend away that becomes more “interrogation” than “relaxation” in this witty and moving rollercoaster of a family comedy-drama.

Lydia R. Diamond (Smart People) brings her gift for sharp dialogue, complex characters and relevant themes back to WT with this look at African-American elite aristocracy, social assumptions and family dynamics. Directed by WT Resident Director Ron OJ Parson (Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom, East Texas Hot Links), this bitingly funny comedy is sure to keep you talking long after the lights have come up.

The cast includes David Alan Anderson (Joe LeVay), Ayanna Bria Bakari (Cheryl), Eric Gerard (Kent), DiMonte Henning (Flip), Kayla Raelle Holder (Kimber) and Jennifer Latimore (Taylor).

The creative team includes Linda Buchanan (Scenic Designer), Caitlin McLeod (Costume Designer), Claire Chrzan (Lighting Designer), Christopher M. LaPorte (Sound Designer), Dominique Nadeau (Dramaturg), Sam Hubbard (Fight Director) and Tristin Hall (Intimacy Director). The Assistant Director is Monet Felton, the Assistant Stage Manager is Rachel Lockett and the Production Stage Manager is David Castellanos.

Artistic Director Michael Halberstam states, “After a highly successful staging of Smart People at Writers Theatre in 2018, audiences told us that they were eager for more from Lydia R. Diamond! Lydia writes about race and class in a deeply sophisticated, generous and provocative way. She empowers audiences to think about paradigms that we take for granted with fresh perspective while writing scintillating dialogue with complex and rich characterizations. This is a rare gift. Furthermore, we are always fortunate to be welcoming Ron OJ Parson back to Writers Theatre. He has staged some of our most successful and beautiful productions in the past decade, and is truly one of the nation’s great directors. This play and this team of artists embodies for me the reasons we do what we do—and we are invited once more to lean forward and engage.”
Single tickets for *Stick Fly* are currently on sale, priced $35 - $80 and are available at www.writerstheatre.org, by phone at 847-242-6000 or in person at the box office at 325 Tudor Court in Glencoe.

**ABOUT THE ARTISTS**

**Lydia R. Diamond** (Playwright) has written the award-winning plays *Smart People*, *Stick Fly*, *Voyeurs de Venus*, *The Bluest Eye*, *The Gift Horse*, *Harriet Jacobs*, *The Inside*, and *Stage Black*. Her work has been produced at Arena Stage, Cort Theatre (Broadway), Chicago Dramatists, Company One, Congo Square, Goodman Theatre, Hartford Stage, Huntington Theatre Company, Jubilee Theatre, Kansas City Repertory, Long Wharf, Lorraine Hansberry, McCarter, Theatre Mo’Olelo Performing Arts Co., MPAACT, New Vic Theatre, Playmakers Repertory, Plowshares Theatre Company, Second Stage Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre Company and TrueColors. Commissions include: Arena Stage, Steppenwolf (4), McCarter, Huntington, Center Stage, Victory Gardens and The Roundabout Theatre Company. A recipient of many playwriting awards, Lydia was also an 2005/06 W.E.B. Du Bois Institute non-resident Fellow, a 2007 TCG/NEA Playwright in Residence at Steppenwolf Theatre, a 2006/07 Huntington Playwright Fellow, a 2012 Sundance Institute Playwright Lab Creative Advisor, is a Board Member with Chicago Dramatists and a 2012/13 Radcliffe Institute Fellow. Lydia is a graduate of Northwestern University (Class of 1991), has an Honorary Doctorate of Arts from Pine Manor College and was 2013/14 Playwright in Residence at Arena Stage. Lydia is on faculty at the University of Illinois at Chicago where she teaches playwriting.

**Ron OJ Parson** (Director) is a Resident Director for Writers and previously directed August Wilson’s *Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom*, *East Texas Hot Links*, *The Caretaker*, and *The Old Settler*. Mr. Parson hails from Buffalo, New York and is a graduate of the professional theatre program of the University of Michigan. He is the former co-founder and artistic director of Chicago’s Onyx Theatre Ensemble and is currently a resident artist at Chicago’s Court Theatre. Ron has worked as both an actor and a director at various theatres in Chicago and regionally. Ron also directed the world premiere of *Palmer Park* at the Stratford Shakespeare Festival in Ontario, Canada.

**David Alan Anderson** (Joe LeVay) returns to Writers Theatre where he previously appeared in *August Wilson’s Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom* and *Witch*. Chicago credits include *Gem of the Ocean* (BTAA winner) and *The Mountaintop* (Jeff Nominee), both with The Court Theatre. David is a recipient of the Lunt-Fontanne Fellowship sponsored by the Ten Chimneys Foundation. He has over twenty-five seasons with The Indiana Repertory theatre in Indianapolis, where his many credits include *Looking Over the President’s Shoulder*, *What I Learned in Paris*, *Julius Caesar*, *The Whipping Man*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Christmas Carol* and many others. Recent works include *Troy in Fences* (Indiana Rep, Denver Center, Arizona Theatre Company and Milwaukee Rep), *Morning After Grace* (Asolo Rep), *Radio Golf* (Cleveland Playhouse) and *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime* (Indiana Rep and Syracuse Stage). Other regional credits include The Guthrie, Baltimore Center Stage, Idaho Shakespeare Festival, Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival, Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival, KC Rep, Geva Theatre and many others. Directing credits include *MVP*, *The Color of Justice* (Indiana Rep), *Topdog/Underdog* and *Two Trains Running* (Phoenix Theatre in Indianapolis). He is a company member with Penumbra Theatre in St. Paul, MN. Recent television works include Showtimes hit series *The Chi*.

**Ayanna Bria Bakari** (Cheryl) appeared at Writers in this season’s production of *The Niceties*. Ayanna graduated with a BFA in acting from The Theatre School at DePaul University in 2017. Since graduating, some of her theatre credits include Cat in *The Originalist* (Indiana Repertory Theatre), Izzie Mae/Clerk Son in Robert O’Hara’s *Insurrection: Holding History* (Stage Left Theatre). Jeff nominated, Sister Felicity in *Suddenly Last Summer* (Raven Theatre), Dr. Love in Paul Michael Thomson’s *Leave Me Alone!* (The Story Theatre), Ekaterina in Fun Harmless *Warmachine* (The New Colony), Natalie Charlesin the world premiere of *How to Catch Creation* by Christina Anderson (Goodman Theatre) and Evelyn Brandon in the Midwest premiere of *Too Heavy For Your Pocket* by Jireh Breon Holder (Timeline Theatre). Ayanna Bria’s television credits include *Chicago PD* (NBC) and a recurring role on *The Chi* (Showtime). She made her film debut in *Holiday Heist* this holiday season. Ayanna Bria is currently an ensemble member with The Story Theatre and is represented by Stewart Talent.

**Eric Gerard** (Kent) is making his Writers Theatre debut. Other Chicago credits include *The Shipment* (Red Tape Theatre), *To Catch a Fish* (TimeLine Theatre), *Akeelah and the Bee* (Adventure Stage Chicago), *King Liz* (Windy City Playhouse), *Octagon* (Jackalope theatre), *My manaña Comes* (Teatro Vista), *Anna Karrinina* (Lifeline Theatre), *The Royal* (American Theatre Company) and *The paranoid style in American Politics* (First Floor Theater.) Eric is Co-Owner and Artistic Director of BlackBox Acting and is represented by Shirley Hamilton Talent.
**DiMonte Henning** (Flip) is a native of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and received his formal theatre training from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and additional training from Milwaukee Repertory Theater’s Emerging Professional Residency program. DiMonte serves as Producing Artistic Director of performing arts organization, Lights! Camera! Soul! where the organization focuses on developing talent across multi-disciplinary art forms. He most recently starred in *Big River: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* as Jim. Additional theater credits include: *Junk* (Milwaukee Repertory Theater), *The Wiz* (First Stage), *Our Town* (Milwaukee Repertory Theater), *Skeleton Crew* (Forward Theater Company), *Dreamgirls* (Milwaukee Repertory Theater), *Black Nativity* (Black Arts MKE), *Deathtrap* (Milwaukee Chamber Theatre), *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (Theatre Lila) and *Hair* (Skylight Music Theatre). TV and Film credits include: Guest starring roles on NBC’s *Chicago P.D.* Seasons 4&6, *UBER, Cousin Subs* and *Harley-Davidson*.

**Kayla Raelle Holder** (Kimber) is a graduate of The Theatre School at DePaul University, where she studied B.F.A. Acting and sociology. She serves as the Assistant Director of The Theatre School's Summer High School Training Program, where she gets to express her passion as a teaching artist. Chicago theatre credits include *King Lear* (Redtwist Theatre), *Mies Julie* (Victory Gardens Theater), *Dontrell, Who Kissed the Sea* (First Floor Theater), *The Skin of Our Teeth* (Remy Bumppo Theatre Company) and *truth and reconciliation* (Sideshow Theatre Company). Voiceover credits: National McDonald’s Radio/TV. Awards: Jeff Award nomination for best ensemble in a play and recipient of the Hoenig Theatre Artist’s Scholarship. Kayla is proudly represented by Grossman & Jack Talent.

**Jennifer Latimore** (Taylor) returns to Writers Theatre where she appeared in *Twelfth Night Or What You Will, The MLK Project: The Fight for Civil Rights*, and *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Chicago credits include *Bernhardt/Hamlet* (Goodman Theatre), *We Are Proud To Present...* (Steppenwolf), *Too Heavy For Your Pocket* (TimeLine Theatre, 2019 BTA Award Winner for Best Featured Actress in a Play), *Harvey* (Court Theatre), *Macbeth*, *Love's Labor's Lost* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater), *The Wickhams: Christmas at Pemberley* and *Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley* (Northlight Theatre). Regional credits include *The African Company Presents Richard III, Arcadia, An Ideal Husband* (American Players Theatre), *Good People, The Color Purple, Dreamgirls* and *A Christmas Carol* (Milwaukee Repertory Theater). TV credits include *The Chi* (Showtime), *Empire, Proven Innocent* (Fox) and *Chicago PD* (NBC). Film credits include *An Acceptable Loss* and *Killing Eleanor*. Jennifer hails from Georgia but is proud to call the Midwest home as well.

**AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT**

**Post-Show Conversation: The Word**
Join us after **every Tuesday** evening performance (excluding First Week and any extension weeks) for a 15-minute discussion of the play, facilitated by a member of the WT Artistic Team.

**Post-Show Conversation: The Artist**
Join us after **every Wednesday** evening performance (excluding First Week and any extension weeks) for a 15-minute talk-back featuring actors from the production, facilitated by a member of the WT Artistic Team.

**Pre-show Conversation: Up Close**
Join us at 7pm in the Patron’s Lounge before every Thursday evening performance (excluding First Week and any extension weeks) for a 15-minute primer on the context and content of the play facilitated by a member of the WT Artistic Team.

**From Page to Stage**
From Page to Stage is a collaborative program between Writers Theatre and select North Shore libraries and community partners, now in its 15th season. This series of special events, lectures, demonstrations and performances is designed to enhance and enrich your appreciation of a Writers Theatre production each season. RSVP is requested. Visit [www.writerstheatre.org/from-page-to-stage-series](http://www.writerstheatre.org/from-page-to-stage-series) for more information and a current list of upcoming events.

Visit [www.writerstheatre.org/events](http://www.writerstheatre.org/events) for more information about any of these special event opportunities.

**RIDE METRA TO WRITERS THEATRE**
In an effort to promote taking public transit to the Theatre, Writers Theatre launched a new promotion in 2013. Any audience member who purchases a ticket to a Writers Theatre production and rides Metra’s Union Pacific North Line to the Theatre may **snap a photo of themselves on the train and post it to their Facebook, Twitter or Instagram account** with a tag of @WritersTheatre (@Writers_Theatre on Instagram) and #StickFlyWT, and upon showing the post at the Writers Theatre Box Office, **receive $5 in cash** to put toward the cost of your fare as a thank you for going green.

*This promotion is available for a limited time only and may end without warning. Ticket must have been paid for in advance. Not valid on comp tickets. More information available at [writerstheatre.org/metra](http://writerstheatre.org/metra)*
WRITERS THEATRE PARTNERS
Writers Theatre is pleased to recognize **BMO Harris Bank** as the Season Sponsor and **ComEd** as the Official Lighting Sponsor of the 2019/20 Season, and **Allstate** as the Corporate Education Sponsor for **Stick Fly**. The Major Production Sponsors are **Thomas and Gail Hodges**. The Artists Council Sponsors are **Laurie and Michael Petersen**.

For more information about Writers Theatre’s 2019/20 partners, visit writerstheatre.org/our-supporters.

ABOUT WRITERS THEATRE
For more than 25 years, Writers Theatre has captivated Chicagoland audiences with inventive interpretations of classic work, a bold approach to contemporary theatre and a dedication to creating the most intimate theatrical experience possible.

Under the artistic leadership of **Michael Halberstam** and the executive leadership of **Kathryn M. Lipuma**, Writers Theatre has grown to become a major Chicagoland cultural destination with a national reputation for excellence, being called the top regional theatre in the nation by *The Wall Street Journal*. The company, which plays to a sold-out and discerning audience of more than 60,000 patrons each season, has garnered critical praise for the consistent high quality and intimacy of its artistry—providing the finest interpretations of both classic and contemporary theatre in its two intensely intimate venues.

In February 2016, Writers Theatre opened a new, state-of-the-art facility. This established the company’s first permanent home—a new theatre center in downtown Glencoe, designed by the award-winning, internationally renowned **Studio Gang Architects**, led by Founder and Design Principal Jeanne Gang, FAIA, in collaboration with Theatre Consultant **Auerbach Pollock Friedlander**. The new facility has allowed the Theatre to continue to grow to accommodate its audience, while maintaining its trademark intimacy. The new facility resonates with and complements the Theatre’s neighboring Glencoe community, adding tremendous value to Chicagoland and helping to establish the North Shore as a premier cultural destination.

Find Writers Theatre on Facebook at Facebook.com/WritersTheatre, follow @WritersTheatre on Twitter or @Writers_Theatre on Instagram. For more information, visit www.writerstheatre.org.

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**Fact Sheet / Stick Fly**

<table>
<thead>
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| Dates:      | First performance: Wednesday, February 5, 2020  
Press opening: Wednesday, February 12, 2020 at 7:30pm  
Closing performance: Sunday, March 15, 2020 |
| Schedule: | Tuesdays – Fridays: 7:30pm  
Saturdays: 3:00pm (except February 8) and 7:30pm  
Sundays: 2:00pm and 6:00pm (except February 9, March 1 & 15) |
| Additional Wednesday matinee performances on February 26 & March 11 at 3:00pm |
| Open-Captioned performance: Saturday, March 14, 2020 at 3pm |
Location: The Alexandra C. and John D. Nichols Theatre
325 Tudor Court, Glencoe

Prices: Prices for all performances range from $35 - $80
Purchase early for best prices

Box Office: The Box Office is located at 325 Tudor Court, Glencoe;
847-242-6000; www.writerstheatre.org

Notes of Interest

Writers Theatre produced Lydia R. Diamond’s Smart People as part of its 2017/18 season.

Ron OJ Parson is a Resident Director at Writers Theatre. Stick Fly is his fifth show as a director at Writers Theatre. He previously directed August Wilson’s Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom, East Texas Hot Links, The Caretaker, and The Old Settler.

Stick Fly is Ayanna Bria Bakari’s second production at Writers Theatre this season. She made her Writers Theatre debut earlier this season in The Niceties. She graduated with a BFA in acting from The Theatre School at DePaul University in 2017 and can be seen in a recurring role on Showtime’s The CHI.

Jennifer Latimore returns to Writers Theatre after appearing in The Importance of Being Earnest; Twelfth Night, Or What You Will and The MLK Project: The Fight for Civil Rights.

Stick Fly is David Alan Anderson’s third production at Writers Theatre, after appearing in Witch and August Wilson’s Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom, also directed by Ron OJ Parson.

Writers Theatre will be participating in Chicago Theatre Week (#CTW20) by offering $30 tickets for performances February 13-23, 2020. CTW tickets will go on sale Tuesday, January 14 at 10am CST at ChicagoTheatreWeek.com. Chicago Theatre Week is an annual celebration of the rich tradition of theatre-going in Chicago, during which visitors and residents can access value-priced tickets, is February 13-23, 2020. As a program of the League of Chicago Theatres, in partnership with Choose Chicago, more than 100 theatre productions are expected to participate in neighborhoods throughout the city and suburbs.

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