

PACIFIC THEATRE PRESENTS
THE MOUNTAINTOP

By Katori Hall

IN SHORT: April 3, 1968. Doctor Martin Luther King Jr. retires to the Lorraine Motel, desperate for a pack of smokes and a good night's sleep after exhorting America to 'be true to what you said on paper'. Enter Camae, an enigmatic hotel maid with a great deal of information about Doctor King's future – and the future of the movement he champions. Featuring **Kwesi Ameyaw** and **Shayna Jones**. Directed by **Omari Newton**.

Plays May 20 - June 11. 8pm Wed-Sat with 2pm Sat matinees at Pacific Theatre, 1440 W 12th Ave. 3pm Sunday matinees May 29 and June 5. Pay-what-you-can preview May 19 at 8pm. For tickets (\$15-36.50) call 604.731.5518 or visit pacifictheatre.org.

VANCOUVER, BC - MAY 2 - *"Cigarettes and coffee? That ain't a diet befitting of a preacher."*

After delivering a prophetic speech during the Memphis sanitation workers' strike, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. returns to his hotel, exhausted and frustrated. When Camae, a hotel maid, arrives with coffee and probing questions, she draws King into a conversation that spans time and space. With vivid theatrical imagination, Pulitzer-winning playwright **Katori Hall** shapes the final night of Dr. King's life into an intimate fantasia and gives us a window into his hopes, vulnerabilities, and fears. Powerful and surprisingly funny, ***The Mountaintop*** has garnered critical and audience acclaim since its London premiere in 2009.

"The greatness of Martin Luther King Junior, cultural icon and civil rights leader, is undeniable. His seminal legacy has been covered many times by mainstream historians, and cultural documentarians," said director **Omari Newton**. "*The Mountaintop* offers an opportunity to delve into the subtle inner workings of the man born Michael King Junior. I am grateful for the opportunity to steward both our outstanding creative team, and Pacific Theatre's dedicated audience, through an exhilarating journey to understand a sometimes flawed, scared, but ever-resilient social justice champion."

The Mountaintop has been a dream production for **Shayna Jones**, who plays Camae, since her days as an apprentice at Pacific Theatre. Ten years after first sharing the script with now-AD **Kaitlin Williams**, Shayna - a playwright and storyteller last seen in Pacific and Newworld Theatre's ***Gather: Stories In Nature*** - is stepping into Camae's apron. **Kwesi Ameyaw**, a familiar Vancouver face in the film and television arena, will be embodying King.

Playwright Katori Hall's mother grew up around the corner from the Lorraine Motel and had begged to see King speak at Mason Temple that night in 1968. But her mother — Hall's grandmother — refused to let her go. "Big Mama ... was like, 'You know they're gon' bomb that church, girl. You need to sit your butt down and you ain't going to that church,'" Hall recounted in an interview. Her mother stayed home, and the next day King was assassinated. "It was the biggest regret of her life," Hall says of her mother. That bit of family history is what gave Hall the idea for her play, even naming the maid Camae, after her mother, Carrie Mae. "**I wanted to put both of them in the same room and give my mother that opportunity that she didn't have in 1968,**" Hall says.

The Mountaintop opens Friday, May 20th and runs until June 11th at Pacific Theatre.

PRAISE FOR THE MOUNTAINTOP

“Crackles with theatricality and a humanity more moving than sainthood.”

– *Newsday*

“Pulls back the layers of King’s sainthood to reveal a man gifted with rhetorical skills and moral conscience, but also subject to human weaknesses.”

– *The Star*

“As audacious as it is inventive.”

– *The New York Times*

ARTISTIC TEAM

Featuring **Kwesi Ameyaw** and **Shayna Jones**.

Directed by **Omari Newton**. Apprentice Direction by **Samantha Forbes**. Set Design by **Brian Ball**. Costume Design by **Stephanie Wong**. Lighting Design by **Jonathan Kim**. Sound Design by **Chengyan Boon**. Props Coordination by **Monica Emme**. Intimacy Direction by **Lisa Goebel**. Stage Management by **Jenny Kim**. Assistant Stage Management by **Samantha Pawliuk**.

High-resolution photos available at [pacifictheatre.org/press-room/#photos](https://www.pacifictheatre.org/press-room/#photos).

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