



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

February 22, 2018  
Press release #1734

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**GUTHRIE THEATER TO PRESENT *FAMILIAR* BY DANAI GURIRA,  
AWARD-WINNING PLAYWRIGHT OF BROADWAY'S *ECLIPSED* AND STAR OF THE  
MARVEL BLOCKBUSTER *BLACK PANTHER* AND AMC ORIGINAL SERIES "THE WALKING DEAD"**

**Previews begin Saturday, March 10; Opening on Friday, March 16;  
Playing through Saturday, April 14, 2018  
on the McGuire Proscenium Stage at the Guthrie Theater**

(*Minneapolis/St. Paul*)—The Guthrie Theater (Joseph Haj, Artistic Director) today announced casting for *Familiar* by playwright, actor and Macalester College alumna Danai Gurira, directed by Taibi Magar. A co-production with Seattle Repertory Theatre (Seattle Rep), *Familiar* is set in the western suburbs of Minneapolis and takes a fresh look at tradition, immigration and assimilation as Zimbabwean-American parents prepare for their oldest daughter's wedding to her white fiancé from Minnetonka.

*Familiar* plays March 10 – April 14, 2018 on the McGuire Proscenium Stage. Single tickets start at \$15 for preview performances (March 10-15) and are on sale now through the Box Office at 612.377.2224, toll-free 877.44.STAGE, 612.225.6244 (Group Sales) and online at [guthrietheater.org](http://guthrietheater.org).

Egyptian-American director Taibi Magar returns to the Guthrie Theater following her Guthrie directorial debut at the helm of *We Are Proud to Present ...* as part of the 2016-2017 Level Nine Series in the Dowling Studio. Magar just opened *Is God Is* at Soho Repertory Theatre (Soho Rep), a piece that *New York Magazine* calls "a rich, funny, unnerving, exhilarating gold mine." Following her work on *Familiar*, Magar will move to the award-winning off-Broadway theater Atlantic Theater Company where she will direct Lauren Yee's newest play, *The Great Leap*.

Danai Gurira, a dynamic and in-demand actor and playwright, currently stars as Michonne in AMC's critically-acclaimed original series "The Walking Dead" and in the recent Marvel megahit film, *Black Panther*. Her play *Eclipsed*, starring Lupita Nyong'o, garnered multiple nominations and awards including the Obie Award, Drama Desk Award, and Tony Award. *Eclipsed* made history as the first play with an all-black, female cast and creative team to premiere on Broadway.

With *Familiar*, Gurira once again examines the stories of women of African ancestry, utilizing disarming humor and heart. There's something old, something new and something borrowed in this feisty, heart-warming play about a Zimbabwean-American family preparing for their daughter Tendi's wedding. Marvelous and Donald have built their American dream in Minnesota, so when Tendi requests a traditional African blessing before marrying her white fiancé from Minnetonka, and a surprise guest drops a bombshell, the rehearsal dinner can't come soon enough. Family fireworks are interwoven with questions of cultural identity in this acclaimed play.

"*Familiar* is a piece of art that speaks to our time, our moment. And we have a ferociously talented cast of actors!" director Taibi Magar told the company and staff at the play's first rehearsal. "*Familiar* is familiar because it is the story of American immigrants. Complicated and beautiful and ... worth fighting for."

The cast features **Harvy Blanks** (Guthrie: debut) as Donald Chinyaramwira, **Shá Cage** (Guthrie: *Romeo and Juliet, King Lear*) as Tendi, **Quinn Franzen** (Guthrie: *We are Proud to Present...*) as Chris, **Perri Gaffney** (Guthrie: debut) as Dr. Marvelous Chinyamurindi, **Aishé Keita** (Guthrie: debut) as Nyasha, **Austene Van** (Guthrie: *Trouble in Mind, Disgraced*) as Prof. Margaret Munyewa, **Wandachristine** (Guthrie: debut) as Anne Mwarimba and **Michael Wieser** (Guthrie: debut) as Brad.

The creative team for *Familiar* includes **Danai Gurira** (Playwright), **Taibi Magar** (Director), **Adam Rigg** (Scenic Designer), **Karen Perry** (Costume Designer), **Tom Mays** (Lighting and Projection Designer), **Scott W. Edwards** (Sound Designer), **Carla Steen** (Dramaturg), **Lucinda Holshue** (Vocal Coach), **Justin Hossle** (Stage Manager), **Todd Kalina** (Assistant Stage Manager) and **Lindsey C. Samples** (Assistant Director).

**Danai Gurira** (Playwright) is an award-winning playwright and actor. She currently plays Michonne on AMC's critically-acclaimed original series "The Walking Dead" and stars in the recently released film *Black Panther*. As a playwright, her works include Broadway's *Eclipsed* (NAACP Award; Helen Hayes Award: Best New Play; Connecticut Critics Circle Award: Outstanding Production of a Play), *In the Continuum* (Obie Award, Outer Critics Award, Helen Hayes Award), and *The Convert* (six Ovation Awards, Los Angeles Outer Critics Award). Danai's newest play *Familiar* received its world premiere at Yale Repertory Theatre (Yale Rep) in 2015 and premiered Off-Broadway at Playwrights Horizons in February 2016. She is a recipient of the Whiting Award, a Hodder Fellow, and has been commissioned by Yale Rep, Center Theatre Group, Playwrights Horizons and the Royal Court.

**Taibi Magar** (Director) is an Egyptian-American director based in New York and a graduate of the Brown/Trinity MFA program. In New York, Taibi has directed and developed work for Ars Nova (Underground Railroad Game, NYT Critics Pick, TONY Critics Pick), The Foundry, TFANA, and the Women's Project Theatre. She is the recipient of a Stephen Sondheim Fellowship, an Oregon Shakespeare Festival Fellowship, a Public Theater Shakespeare Fellowship, the TFANA Actors and Director Project Fellowship and is an alumnus of the Lincoln Center Directors Lab. Regionally, she has directed and developed work at the Alley Theatre, Trinity Repertory Company, Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival, Shakespeare & Company and Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and has directed for many academic institutions including The Juilliard School, Fordham University and New York University.

*Familiar* is sponsored by Ameriprise Financial and the Minnesota State Arts Board with special support from the National Endowment for the Arts' Art Works program. Post-play discussions and access services (ASL, Audio Described and Open Captioned performances) are available on select dates. Visit [guthrietheater.org](http://guthrietheater.org) or call the Box Office at 612.377.2224 for more information.

**THE GUTHRIE THEATER** (Joseph Haj, Artistic Director) was founded by Sir Tyrone Guthrie in 1963 and is an American center for theater performance, production, education and professional training, dedicated to producing the great works of dramatic literature and to cultivating the next generation of theater artists. Under Haj's leadership, the Guthrie is guided by four core values: Artistic Excellence; Community; Equity, Diversity and Inclusion; and Fiscal Responsibility. The Guthrie produces a mix of classic and contemporary plays on three stages and continues to set a national standard for excellence in theatrical production and performance, serving nearly 400,000 patrons annually. In 2006, the Guthrie opened a new home, designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Jean Nouvel, located on the banks of the Mississippi River in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Open to the public year-round, it houses three state-of-the-art stages, production facilities, classrooms, full-service restaurants and dramatic public lobbies. [guthrietheater.org](http://guthrietheater.org)

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