

GEVA THEATRE PRESENTS *FURLOUGH'S PARADISE*

On Stage April 14 – May 10, 2026

Rochester, N.Y. — Geva presents one of *Variety's* top Storytellers to Watch in 2025, **a.k. payne**, whose play *Furlough's Paradise* is a multiple award-winning story of kinship, love, and moving through grief. On a three-day furlough for her mother's funeral, Sade stays with her only cousin. Mina is also on a brief reprieve from her life on the West Coast, and the cousins, who were once so close, come together to try to make sense of childhood memories and their dreams for the future as time ticks toward Sade's return to prison. "An abolition play or simply a play about cousins" from one of America's most thrilling new playwrights.

Geva is partnering with the Frederick Douglass Institute and Department of Black Studies at the University of Rochester on a series of talkbacks around *Furlough's Paradise* and the upcoming *Baron Vaughn: Cycle Breaker*. Artist Adam Eaton's exhibit "Black is Beautiful" will be on display in the lobby throughout the shows as well. Geva will also be holding a special workshop with Spiritus Christi Prison Outreach at Jennifer House for previous or current justice involved, identifying women inspired by a.k. payne's *Furlough's Paradise*.

Winner of the 20th annual Alliance/Kendeda National Graduate Playwriting Competition, *Furlough's Paradise* premiered at Alliance Theatre in 2024. Then in 2025, it won the prestigious Susan Smith Blackburn Prize, the oldest and largest playwriting prize honoring female and non-binary playwrights who have written English language plays. Opening within weeks of each other, Geva is among three professional regional theatres presenting this play across the country this spring: Yale Repertory Theatre in New Haven, Connecticut, and Curious Theatre Company in Denver, Colorado.

Furlough's Paradise is directed by Geva's Resident Director/Associate Producer **Jasmine B. Gunter** and runs on the Wilson Stage April 14 – May 10, 2026. Tickets are on sale now; visit GevaTheatre.org or call the Box Office at 585-232-4382.

"We're so delighted to share a.k. payne's beautiful play with our audiences in the Rochester region, and to extend the conversation beyond the stage through our programs with the Frederick Douglass Institute, artist Adam Eaton, and Jennifer House," said Artistic Director Elizabeth Williamson.

The Cast:

CLOTEAL L. HORNE (Mina) (she/her) Select credits: Off-Broadway/New York: *The Convent of Pleasure* (Red Bull Theatre); *Cross that River* (Marcus Garvey Amphitheater); *The Steadfast* (Slant Theatre); *Dirty Blood* (Billie Holiday Theatre). Select Regional Credits include: *Fires in the Mirror*, *Solo Performer* (Long Wharf/ Baltimore Center Stage); *Crumbs from the Table of Joy* (Crossroads Theatre), *Fat Ham* (Virginia Stage Co.); *The Bluest Eye* (Huntington); *She A Gem* (NYTW). *Blues for an Alabama Sky*, *Black Odyssey* (Trinity Rep.) *Hang* (S& Co.); *Saturday Night/Sunday Morning* (LyricStage, Elliot Norton Nominee) TV: *Grey's Anatomy*, *GS*, *Seasons 19 and 20*. Film: *Stay Here with Me* (Tuli Media), *The Promotion* (C1 Media), *What We Owe Each Other* (RISDI), *Driving While Black Magic*. I am a product of my grandmother's prayers +

my ancestors' wildest dreams. Glory be. B.F.A BU and an M.F.A in Acting from Brown /Trinity.
cloteallhorne.com

SHUNTÉ LOFTON (Sade) (she/her) is beyond grateful to be making her Geva Theatre debut! Previous credits include five seasons with the Colorado Shakespeare Festival where she played Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Mistress Ford in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Cordelia in *King Lear*, Julia in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and Constance in *King John*. She also worked at the American Shakespeare Center in Staunton, Virginia, where she performed in 22 productions. Her selected regional credits include Opal in *Fat Ham* and Jane in *Pride and Prejudice* (Cleveland Play House). She recently finished touring with The Acting Company and can be seen on NBC's *The Hunting Party*. She received her MFA from the Case Western Reserve University/Cleveland Play House and is a proud member of Actors' Equity. She is represented by Dani Super Management.

Understudying both roles is Rochester-based performer **Jade Hill** (she/her).

The Creative Team:

Along with Director **Jasmine B. Gunter** (she/her; Hangar Theatre, SUNY Brockport), the rest of the creative team includes Scenic Designer **Regina Garcia** (she/her; South Coast Rep, the Goodman Theatre, Indiana Repertory), Costume Designer **David Arevalo** (he/him; Zach Theatre, Alley Theatre, The Kennedy Center), Lighting Designer **Seojung Jang** (she/her), Sound Designer **Evdoxia Ragkou** (she/her; Playwrights Horizons, A.R.T. New York Theaters, Lincoln Center LCT3, Yale Repertory Theater), Dramaturg **Jordan Ealey** (they/she; WAM Theatre, Round House Theatre Company, Assistant Professor of Black Studies at the University of Rochester), with Movement Consultant **Jayme Bermudez** (he/him; Assistant Artistic Director, Borinquen Dance Theatre; Adjunct Professor at Nazareth University). **JuanCarlos Contreras** is the Production Stage Manager (he/him) with Assistant Stage Manager **Kristen Larson** (she/her).

Geva's 53rd Season is sponsored by ESL Federal Credit Union with Honorary Season Producer Dr. Dawn Lipson. *Furlough's Paradise* is presented with support from Executive Producer Long Construction NY LLC and Media Sponsors News 8 WROC and 103.9 WDKX. Geva's Official Storage Space Sponsor is Buckingham Properties and Official Vehicle Sponsor is Vision Automotive.

Related Events:

Black is Beautiful: Adam Eaton Art Exhibition

- Monday, April 20th, from 6-8pm - This event is free and open to the public.
 - o Join us in Geva's Lobby to kick off *Black is Beautiful* with live music by the band *Night and Day* lead by Candice O'Connor.

Adam Eaton's artwork will be Presented at Geva Theatre and in The Library Link Gallery located at the Central Library of Rochester & Monroe County (115 South Ave, Rochester, NY 14604). This exhibit will be on display in Geva's lobby from April 20 – June 7, 2026 and can be viewed by the public any time the Geva Box Office is open. Hours are listed at the top of Geva's website. *Black Is Beautiful* is a fine art portrait photography exhibition by Adam Eaton, created to honor the beauty, dignity, and humanity of Black people. Rooted in community and visual storytelling, this exhibition invites viewers to slow down, reflect, and experience Black beauty celebrated across two locations in Rochester. More information about the artist: adameaton.com/about

Black Out Affinity Performance: Sunday, April 26, 2pm Performance

- Following the 2pm performance a discussion will be led by Dramaturg and University of Rochester Professor, Jordan Ealey, with Philip McHarris joining the conversation. Celebrate this powerful production through an afternoon of affinity where we hope to provide a welcoming space for Black audience members and performers to enjoy this performance together. Non-Black-identifying patrons are welcome to attend.

Talkbacks: Presented in partnership with the Frederick Douglass Institute and Department of Black Studies at the University of Rochester, free and open to the public.

- Saturday, May 2, following the 3pm Matinee
 - o Visit Geva's website for more information on this talkback topic and speaker.
- Sunday, May 10, following the 2pm Matinee
 - o Discussion paired with both *Furlough's Paradise* and *Baron Vaughn: Cycle Breaker*, led by Resident Director/Producer Jasmine B. Gunter.

Special Community Workshop: In collaboration with Spiritus Christi Prison Outreach at Jennifer House, Geva Theatre presents a two-part workshop for previous or current justice involved, identifying women inspired by a.k.a. payne's *Furlough's Paradise*. This workshop is co-created and facilitated by our Connectivity team:

- Jacqueline Raymond Wegman, Director of Connectivity, and Geva teaching artists
- Jasmine B. Gunter, Resident Director/Producer

Prologue – Patrons are welcome to join a Geva staff member in the theatre an hour before the show on select nights for exclusive insights and behind-the-scenes stories. Tune in to Geva's [YouTube Channel](#) closer to the opening date of this show for a recording of the Prologue. The prologue schedule can be found [here](#).

Accessible Performances

Sign Interpreted (ASL)

- Thursday 5/7 – 7:30pm

Audio Described

- Sunday 5/3 – 2:00pm

Open Captioning

- Saturday 4/18 – 2:00pm
- Wednesday 5/6 – 2:00pm
- Wednesday 5/6 – 7:30pm

Learn more about Geva's accessibility options [here](#).

Ticket and Performance Information

When: April 14 – May 10, 2026

Where: On the Wilson Stage, 75 Woodbury Boulevard, Rochester, New York 14607

To Purchase: Single tickets start at \$30 and may be purchased through the Box Office by calling 585-232-4382, visiting in-person, or online at GevaTheatre.org. Discounted tickets are available for groups of 10+, to purchase call 585-420-2090. *All prices, dates, and times are subject to change.*

About Geva Theatre

Founded in 1972, Geva Theatre is a not-for-profit, professional theatre company dedicated to creating and producing professional theatre productions, programs, and services of a national standard.

Geva offers a wide variety of educational, engagement, and literary programs, nurturing audiences and artists alike. Geva Theatre sits on the ancestral and unceded territory of the Onon-dowa-gah, or “the people of the Great Hill.” In English, they are known as the Seneca people, “the keeper of the western door.” They have stewarded this land through generations, and Geva pays respect and gives thanks to their elders, past and present.

Geva is under the leadership of Artistic Director Elizabeth Williamson and Executive Director James Haskins.

Find out more about Geva Theatre at GevaTheatre.org or by connecting with us on social media. Facebook: facebook.com/gevatheatrecenter, Twitter: [@gevatheatre](https://twitter.com/gevatheatre), Instagram: [@gevatheatre](https://instagram.com/gevatheatre), LinkedIn: linkedin.com/company/geva-theatre-center.

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