

# A.C.T. AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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“One of the best players you have never heard of” —Negro Leagues Baseball Players Association

“Best New Play of 2019” —*Wall Street Journal*

“Critic’s Pick! Astonishing, dancelike movement by Camille A. Brown” —*The New York Times*

“A compelling must-see play” —*Theatermania*

“A provocative story of grit and determination” —*Newsday*

FOLLOWING A WORLD PREMIERE AT NEW YORK CITY’S ROUNDABOUT THEATRE COMPANY, TONY AWARD WINNER AND AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER ARTISTIC DIRECTOR PAM MACKINNON BRINGS HER WILDLY SUCCESSFUL PRODUCTION OF LYDIA R. DIAMOND’S *TONI STONE* TO A.C.T.’S GEARY THEATER

Making its West Coast premiere, *Toni Stone* is the extraordinary, real-life story of a trail-blazing Bay Area baseball player

A.C.T.’s Geary Theater  
March 5–29, 2020

SAN FRANCISCO (January 15, 2020)—**Tony Award winner and American Conservatory Theater (A.C.T.) Artistic Director Pam MacKinnon** announced today the full cast and creative team for Lydia R. Diamond’s new play, *Toni Stone*. Toni Stone dreams of nothing but baseball. But to become the first woman to play professionally with men as a member of the Negro League’s Indianapolis Clowns, she must confront hostile crowds, ruthless team owners, and players who slide spikes first. As she negotiates life’s challenges and opportunities on and off the field, Toni stays true to herself and reaches for who she can be. In this new play, Diamond (Broadway’s *Stick Fly* and Showtime’s *The Affair*) uncovers the theatrical journey in Martha Ackmann’s book, *Curveball: The Remarkable True Story of Toni Stone*. The culmination of a seven-plus-year collaboration between Diamond and MacKinnon, *Toni Stone* is the extraordinary, real-life story of a trail-blazing Bay Area athlete. *Toni Stone* is a coproduction with Arena Stage. Following a wildly successful world premiere at the Roundabout Theatre Company in New York City, *Toni Stone* will have its West Coast premiere at A.C.T.’s Geary Theater (415 Geary St., San Francisco) **March 5–29, 2020**. Press night for *Toni Stone* will be held on Wednesday, March 11, 2020. Single

tickets (ranging from \$15–\$110) are available at the A.C.T. Box Office at **415-749-2228** or online at [act-sf.org](http://act-sf.org).

*Ticket prices are subject to change without notice.*

Under the direction of MacKinnon, the cast of *Toni Stone* includes (in alphabetical order): **Daniel J. Bryant, JaBen Early, Kenn E. Head, Marquis D. Gibson, Rodney Earl Jackson, Jr., Sean-Maurice Lynch, Ray Shell, Jarrod Smith**, and Helen Hayes Award winner **Dawn Ursula** as ‘Toni Stone.’

“This project has been in my life for more than seven years,” said **MacKinnon**. “After a fantastic off-Broadway debut, I am thrilled to be bringing Toni Stone’s story to the Bay Area where it belongs. She lived in the Fillmore district and later Oakland and Alameda. Lydia R. Diamond’s play is a sweeping Black American baseball play about an exceptional woman playing America’s game on her terms.”

The creative team for *Toni Stone* includes Tony Award nominee and Bessie Award winner **Camille A. Brown** (Choreographer), **Riccardo Hernandez** (Scenic Designer), **Dede Ayite** (Costume Designer), **Allen Lee Hughes** (Lighting Designer), and **Broken Chord** (Sound Design and Original Music). *Toni Stone* is produced in association with **Samantha Barrie**.

In connection with *Toni Stone*, A.C.T. will offer numerous **InterACT events**—many of which are presented free of charge—that will give patrons opportunities to get closer to the action while having an entire night out at the theater. Visit [act-sf.org/interact](http://act-sf.org/interact) to learn more about subscribing to these events throughout the season:

- **Bike to the Theater Night:**  
*Thursday, March 5, 6:30 p.m.*  
Providing a greener alternative to theater transportation, A.C.T. and the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition offer free valet bike parking, as well as a special discount on tickets, for these select performances.
- **Drinks & Drama Friday:**  
*Friday, March 6, 6 p.m.*  
A new preshow evening of specialty cocktails, pop-up food, a DJ, and \$15 tickets to the performance
- **San Francisco Giants Day**  
*Tuesday, March 10*  
The San Francisco Giants have partnered with A.C.T. on *Toni Stone* and will be hosting San Francisco Giants Day with interactive preshow activities, giveaways, and more.
- **Prologue:**  
*Tuesday, March 10, 5 p.m.*  
Before the curtain goes up, get a sneak peek at the artistic process at this fascinating preshow discussion with the director and artistic staff.
- **Theater on the Couch:**  
*Friday, March 13, following the 8 p.m. performance*  
This exciting postshow discussion series addresses audience questions and explores the minds, motives, and behavior of the characters.
- **Audience Exchanges:**  
*Tuesday, March 17, 7 p.m. | Sunday, March 22, 2 p.m. | Wednesday, March 25, 2 p.m.*  
After the show, stick around for a lively Q&A session with the actors and artists who create the work onstage.

- **Pride Night (formerly OUT with A.C.T.):**  
*Wednesday, March 18, before and following the 7:30 p.m. performance*  
A revamped pre- and postshow party celebrating LGBTQ+ pride within the theater community
- **Wine Night:**  
*Tuesday, March 24, 6:30 p.m.*  
Before the show, raise a glass at this wine-tasting event featuring the Bay Area's hottest local wineries.
- **PlayTime:**  
*Saturday, March 28, 12:45 p.m.*  
Before this matinee performance, get hands-on with the artists who make it happen at this interactive theater workshop.

*Toni Stone* is made possible by the generous support of **The Sheri and Les Biller Family Foundation, The National Endowment for the Arts, and the San Francisco Giants.**

A.C.T.'s production of *Toni Stone* is also made possible by Season Presenter **Kenneth and Giselle Miller**; Executive Producers **Kevin and Celeste Ford**; **The Milledge and Patti Hart Family**; **Jo S. Hurley**; **Fred M. Levin and Nancy Livingston\*\***, **The Shenson Foundation**; **David and Carla Riemer**; **Abby and Gene Schnair**; Producers **Rich Rava and Elisa Neipp**; **Lori Halverson Schryer**; **Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP**; Associate Producers **Linda K. Brewer**; **Daniel Cohn and Lynn Brinton**; **Ms. Linda Kurtz**; and **Marion and Emmett Stanton.**

A.C.T. would also like to acknowledge its 2019–20 Season Presenters **Jerome L. and Thao N. Dodson**; **Frannie Fleishhacker**; **Priscilla and Keith Geeslin**; **James C. Hormel and Michael P. Nguyen-Hormel**; **Kenneth and Gisele Miller**; **Toni Rembe and Arthur Rock**; **Robina Riccitiello**; **Mary and Steven Swig**; **Jeff and Laurie Ubben**; and **Kay Yun and Andre Neumann-Loreck**; and Company Sponsors **Mrs. Barbara Bakar**; **Lesley Ann Clement and Karl Lukaszewicz**; **Ray and Dagmar Dolby Family Fund**; **Kevin and Celeste Ford**; **Kirke and Nancy Sawyer Hasson**; **Jeri Lynn and Jeffrey W. Johnson**; **Fred M. Levin and Nancy Livingston\*\***, **The Shenson Foundation**; **Burt\*\* and Deedee McMurtry**; **David and Carla Riemer**; **Patti and Rusty Rueff**; and **Aaron Vermut and Adriana López Vermut**; Additional support provided by **Hilton Union Square** and **Parc 55 San Francisco**, A.C.T.'s Official Hotel Partner.

*\*\*deceased*

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## **FACT SHEET FOR TONI STONE**

### **WHAT:**

Toni Stone dreams of nothing but baseball. But to become the first woman to play professionally with men as a member of the Negro League's Indianapolis Clowns, she must confront hostile crowds, ruthless team owners, and players who slide spikes first. As she negotiates life's challenges and opportunities on and off the field, Toni stays true to herself and reaches for who she can be. In this new play, Diamond (Broadway's *Stick Fly* and Showtime's *The Affair*) uncovers the theatrical journey in Martha Ackmann's book, *Curveball: The Remarkable True Story of Toni Stone*. The culmination of a seven-plus-year collaboration between Diamond and MacKinnon, *Toni Stone* is the extraordinary, real-life story of a trail-blazing Bay Area athlete.

### **WHO:**

Written by **Lydia R. Diamond**

Directed by **Pam MacKinnon**

### **CAST** (in alphabetical order):

**Daniel J. Bryant, JaBen Early, Kenn E. Head, Marquis D. Gibson, Rodney Earl Jackson, Jr., Sean-Maurice Lynch, Ray Shell, Jarrod Smith,** and Helen Hayes Award winner **Dawn Ursula** as 'Toni Stone.'

### **CREATIVE TEAM:**

**Camille A. Brown** (Choreographer), **Riccardo Hernandez** (Scenic Designer), **Dede Ayite** (Costume Designer), **Allen Lee Hughes** (Lighting Designer), and **Broken Chord** (Sound Design and Original Music). Produced in association with **Samantha Barrie**.

### **WHERE:**

**A.C.T.'s Geary Theater (415 Geary St., San Francisco)**

### **WHEN:**

**March 5–29, 2020**

Press Night: Wednesday, March 11, 2020

### **PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE:**

Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday at 2 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.

Thursdays at 7:30 p.m.

Fridays at 8 p.m.

Saturdays at 2 p.m. & 8 p.m.

Sundays at 2 p.m.

### **InterACT Events**

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Wine Night: **Tuesday, March 24, 6:30 p.m.**

PlayTime: **Saturday, March 28, 12:45 p.m.**

### **TICKETS & INFORMATION:**

**415-749-2228 | [act-sf.org](http://act-sf.org)**

\$15–\$110

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### **PRESS:**

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