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“A sprawling series, moving between the United States and Nigeria—and also across time and space.”—*The New York Times*

“A deeply felt perspective on immigration and the unforeseen complications of an identity split between the American melting pot and a rich African heritage.”—*Los Angeles Times*

## AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER AND MAGIC THEATRE ANNOUNCE PARTNERSHIP FOR UPCOMING PRODUCTIONS FROM MFONISO UDOFIA’S ACCLAIMED UFOT FAMILY CYCLE

### EXCLUSIVE PACKAGE DEAL PROVIDES SPECIAL PRICING FOR BOTH PRODUCTIONS

SAN FRANCISCO (November 20, 2018)—San Francisco’s **American Conservatory Theater (A.C.T.)** and **Magic Theatre** announced today that they will collaborate on a thrilling theatrical event, bringing two plays from **Mfoniso Udofia’s** acclaimed **Ufot Family Cycle** to the stage. From **February 15–March 31, 2019**, A.C.T. will present ***Her Portmanteau*** at the Strand Theater (1127 Market St.) and from **March 27–April 21, 2019**, the Magic Theatre (2 Marina Blvd., Building D) will present ***In Old Age***. Through an exclusive package deal, patrons can purchase tickets for both plays, which can be seen in any order, for \$40 each—for a savings of up to 45% off their individual ticket price. This package deal is available now by calling the A.C.T. Box Office at 415.749.2228 or online at [www.ufotplays-sf.com](http://www.ufotplays-sf.com). Package holders receive free ticket exchanges, priority invitations to special events, and exclusive content on this Bay Area theatrical event.

Says A.C.T. Artistic Director **Pam MacKinnon**: “We look forward to partnering with the Magic Theatre on the fourth and fifth plays of Mfoniso Udofia’s wildly ambitious, nine-play legacy saga. It is a unique opportunity for Bay Area audiences to immerse themselves in the deep and complicated journey of a Nigerian American family reconciling their complicated pasts so that they might have a future together. I am honored to welcome Mfoniso—an A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts alumna—back to her artistic home and to celebrate her brilliant storytelling.”

Adds Magic Theatre Artistic Director **Loretta Greco**: “After championing the work of this incredible artist through our Virgin Play series, our production of the first cycle play, *Sojourners*, and our world premiere of the third, *runboyrun*, I am thrilled to be teaming up with A.C.T. in support of Mfoniso Udofia, a writer we both have a deep and long-term commitment to. I’m most excited for our collective audiences to meet—or re-meet—the women of Mfoniso’s Ufot family and to reap the joy of experiencing two of her heart-filled plays in tandem once again.”

Playwright Mfoniso Udofia is a first-generation Nigerian American storyteller and educator, and obtained her M.F.A. in acting from the American Conservatory Theater. The Ufot Family Cycle, a series of nine plays exploring the history of Nigerian immigration in America through the eyes of one family, began through Udofia’s residencies at the National Black Theatre’s I Am Soul program and The Playwrights Realm’s Page One program. In January 2016, The Playwrights Realm produced the world premiere of *Sojourners*, the Ufot Family origin story. In spring 2016, the Magic Theatre produced *Sojourners* in repertory with the world premiere of the third installment in the Ufot Family Cycle, *runboyrun*. In spring 2017, New York Theatre Workshop produced a new production of *Sojourners* in repertory with the world premiere of *Her Portmanteau*, to universal critical acclaim. A.C.T. has commissioned Udofia to write the eighth installment of the cycle.

***Her Portmanteau*** is a taut and achingly poignant drama exploring the multigenerational bonds of a Nigerian family living in the United States. Traveling from Lagos to visit her mother, Abasiama, and American-born sister for the first time in two decades, thirtysomething Iniabasi arrives to a snowy landscape, and even chillier truths inside a small Manhattan apartment. As Nigerian traditions clash with American realities, the family is forced to confront its literal and emotional baggage and its painful legacies across language, continents, and cultures. Pulsing with humor and heartache, this tender and hopeful window into an evolving family is “a reminder that most Americans share a common origin story” (*The New York Times*).

The fifth installment of the Ufot family cycle, ***In Old Age***, continues the story of Abasiama, offering both a purge and a peacemaking, frenzy and faith. When Azell Abernathy, a seasoned repairman, arrives at the home of Abasiama to redo the floors of her dilapidated New England home, he is surprised to be met with stubborn resistance. The two clash, challenge each other, and eventually form an unlikely spiritual connection. Abasiama and Azell learn the true nature of forgiveness and love, just as life takes a new turn.

Both productions are under the direction of **Victor Malana Maog**. Named one of *American Theatre* magazine’s

“People to Watch,” Maog is a theater director, educator, and arts leader with over 25 years of experience directing projects, programs, and companies that boldly meet at the intersections of world-class art-making, popular culture, and forward-thinking community engagement. His award-winning work has reached over half the continental United States, including at The Public Theater, Hartford Stage, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Signature Theatre Company, Connecticut Repertory Theatre, and more.

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### **ABOUT AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER**

American Conservatory Theater is a Tony Award–winning theater and educational institution dedicated to nurturing the art of live theater through dynamic productions, intensive actor training in its conservatory, and an ongoing engagement with its community. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Pam MacKinnon and Executive Director Jennifer Bielstein, A.C.T. embraces its responsibility to conserve, renew, and reinvent our relationship to the rich theatrical traditions and literatures that are our collective legacy, while exploring new artistic forms and new communities. A commitment to the highest standards informs every aspect of A.C.T.’s creative work. Founded by pioneer of the regional theater movement William Ball, A.C.T. opened its first San Francisco season in 1967. Since then, A.C.T. has performed more than 400 productions to a combined audience of more than seven million people. A.C.T. reaches more than 250,000 people through its productions and programs every year. For more information, visit [act-sf.org](http://act-sf.org).

### **ABOUT MAGIC THEATRE**

Now celebrating its 51st year of continuous operation, Magic is dedicated to creative risk: we cultivate bold new plays and playwrights to produce incendiary and ideologically robust stories that ask substantive questions about our place in humanity. Magic provides a nurturing yet rigorous artistic home where innovative writers can create a body of work. We believe that developing an evolved artistic vocabulary with the playwright at our side greatly improves a playwright’s chances to thrive. By adding voices to the canon, we ensure the vibrancy of the American theater.

Magic’s impact has resonated throughout the country and beyond since its founding by John Lion in 1967; Lion brought in Sam Shepard and Michael McClure as playwrights-in-residence, establishing Magic as a space for the communion of playwright and audience. From these early plays to the world premieres of Luis Alfaro’s *Oedipus el Rey* and Taylor Mac’s *The Lily’s Revenge* and *Hir*, Magic continues to produce groundbreaking new work.

Since Artistic Director Loretta Greco assumed leadership of Magic in 2008, the theatre has produced 20 world premieres, 17 of which have enjoyed life beyond the Magic stage. Magic plays have received numerous awards including the Pulitzer Prize, ten Obie Awards, the Kennedy Center Award, Bay Area Critics’ Circle Awards, and the NAACP Image Award. For more information, visit: [magictheatre.org](http://magictheatre.org).

### **ABOUT MFONISO UDOFIA**

Mfoniso Udofoia, a first-generation Nigerian American storyteller and educator, attended Wellesley College and obtained her M.F.A. in acting from the American Conservatory Theater. During her stay in the Bay Area, she co-pioneered the groundbreaking youth theater initiative, The Nia Project, which provided artistic outlets for youths residing in the Bayview/Hunters Point district. Udofoia is also currently at work on a commission from the Oregon Shakespeare Festival translating Shakespeare’s *Othello*, through its Play On! program. Her plays have been developed at and/or presented/produced by The Playwrights Realm, Magic Theatre, Dr. Barbara Ann Teer’s National Black Theatre, Hedgebrook, Sundance Theatre Lab, SPACE on Ryder Farm, NNPN New Play Showcase, Makehouse, Soul Productions, terraNOVA Collective, Interstate 73, the New Black Fest, Rising Circle Theater Collective’s INKTank, At Hand Theatre Company, the Standard Collective, American Slavery Project, Liberation Theatre Company, and more. Udofoia was a finalist for the 2015 PoNY Prize, the Eugene O’Neill

National Playwrights Conference, Bay Area Playwrights Festival, Many Voices Fellowship, Page73 Development Programs, the Playwrights' Center Jerome Fellowship, New York Theatre Workshop's 20/50 Fellowship, and the Lark Playwrights' Week. She is the recipient of the 2017–18 McKnight National Residency and Commission at the Playwrights' Center in Minneapolis. You can follow her at @mfudofia or visit [mfonisoudofia.com](http://mfonisoudofia.com) for the latest news on her upcoming works.