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Voices Festival Productions Presents: Letters to Kamala/Dandelion Peace
The timely world premiere double-bill from acclaimed playwright Rachel Lynett asks if we can find fertile ground in a time of scorched earth politics

WASHINGTON, DC (May 1, 2024)— Beginning on June 8 and running through June 30, 2024, at Universalist National Memorial Church (1810 16th Street, NW, Washington, DC) [Voices Festival Productions](#) presents a world premiere double-bill that looks at how women of color rise to power, its precarity, and what must be sacrificed in the name of change. From one of America's freshest, most daring voices, Yale Prize winning playwright Rachel Lynett's, *Letters to Kamala/Dandelion Peace* presents two alternate visions of politics. First with a critical eye and then a provocative comedic touch, Rachel Lynett's riveting, newly commissioned full-length play juxtaposes a spiritual visitation from three trailblazing women lost to history, against the hilarious turf warfare of a community garden. The results will leave audiences feeling part inspired, part infuriated, and fully glad they came.

Letters To Kamala is set in 2020, right before election night as the spirits of three major political women in US history come to visit Vice Presidential candidate Kamala Harris to offer words of rough wisdom, practical caution, and sisterly support. A call to recognize powerful women of color throughout history, we meet **Charlotta Bass**, the first Black woman candidate for Vice President in the United States (played by **Kendra Holloway**); **Charlene Mitchell**, the first Black woman to run for president of the US (played by **Fatima Quander**); and **Patsy Matsu Takemoto Mink**, the first woman of color to be elected to the house of representatives, co-author and sponsor of the Title IX law, and first Asian-American woman to run for congress and for president (played by **Mariele Atienza**). The play offers a bracing history and thought-provoking meditation on group identity, allegiance, the cost of breaking barriers, and the thorny work of institutional change. *Letters to Kamala* is a blistering play of tough love that asks what we are and are not willing to compromise in the name of "progress."

Dandelion Peace, which follows a short intermission, sets out to prove that all is fair in love and gardening. When a community garden member rips up another member's "invasive" dandelions, all hell breaks loose and a struggle for power ensues in this satirical allegory about women of color attempting to balance personal gain with collective, agricultural good. Literal and figurative boundaries are pushed, as competition for the garden presidency heats up to a blaze. We are left to question how we give and share power, and ask, in this political climate, "is there no safe soil?"

Playwright Rachel Lynett is an award-winning, queer, Afro-Latinx playwright known for writing dark dramedies about complex, complicated women of color. Her work seeks to expand how women are depicted on stage by inviting her audiences into a world of humor and relatability. Her play, *Abortion Road Trip* received a [workshop production by Theatre Prometheus](#) as part of Capital Fringe where it won Best Comedy (2017) and was later presented by Theatre Prometheus, as a part of the 2017 Kennedy Center Page to Stage Festival. Additionally, Lynett is one of the 2020 recipients for the Artist 360 grant. In 2021 Lynette won the [Yale Drama Series Prize](#) for her play [Apologies to Lorraine Hansberry \(You Too August Wilson\)](#). The work was chosen from thousands of entries by the Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Paula Vogel, and was subsequently [workshopped by Voices Festival Productions](#) in 2022, directed by A. Lorraine Robinson.

Director **A. Lorraine Robinson**, received the Central Ohio Theater Critics Circle Award for Best Director and Best Production for *The Laramie Project* at CATCO in Columbus, Ohio. She also is a three time recipient of the Tony Award: Excellence in Theatre Education - Honorable Mention. Robinson is the Artistic Producing Partner at Voices Festival Productions.

About Rachel Lynett's work, Robinson notes: "Rachel Lynett is a trailblazer, championing complex women of color in her stories. Her plays are challenging, heartfelt, funny, and fearless as she is always playing with form. I am so thrilled that we are bringing her and more of her incredible work to DC audiences."

VFP Founding Artistic Producing Partner, **Ari Roth**, adds "We commissioned a new play from Rachel Lynett after reading her hour-long *Letters to Kamala* and being wowed by the amount of learning that went to – and that was pulsating out of – this excavation of three towering heroines – and I had never heard of any of them! Most people we knew hadn't! We wanted more from Rachel, to create a full evening and, quite surprisingly, she gave us a comic meditation on highly personalized political in-fighting from a very different perspective. From the grand themes of transformational social change in Part I, we move to localized turf warfare in Part II, which is quite emblematic of the tawdry political times we're living through."

Both plays will feature the same three highly acclaimed actors - **Mariele Atienza** (Patsy Mink, Moira), **Kendra Holloway** (Charlotta Bass, Anita) and **Fatima Quander** (Charlene Mitchell, Zuri). The award-winning production team is rounded out by **Heidi Castle Smith** (set), **Venus Gulbranson** and **Sunshine DeCastro** (lighting co-designers), **Brandee Mathies** (costume designer) **David Lamont Wilson** (sound designer), **Tyra Bell** (properties and scenic charge) and **Chitra Subramanian** (choreographing sequences for actor and gardening appliances).

To purchase tickets for this double bill, please visit [Voices Festival Productions](#). Single ticket prices for regular tickets start at \$25 for previews (June 8-12), and \$45 for general performances. Discount tickets are available for those under 30 years of age for \$20. Run time for the entire evening is two hours, which includes a 15 minute intermission.

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About VFP

Voices Festival Productions (VFP) is an independent theater production company based in Washington DC, producing theatrical works that stimulate debate, discourse, introspection and awareness, humanizing headlines and creating intersectional bonds between communities here in the US, locally and globally. A centerpiece of our programming is the long-running [Voices From a Changing Middle East Festival](#) (begun in 2000 at Theater J, before moving to Mosaic and now VFP), where we have most recently presented five workshop readings of Israeli and Palestinian plays, presented under the umbrella theme “At War: Before & After,” following four productions of Middle-East centered work in 2022. *Letters To Kamala/Dandelion Peace* is the second full production in VFP’s “Voices From a Changing Nation” series which included the 2023 Capital Fringe Festival hit, [#Charlottesville](#). VFP has also presented plays from [Ukrainian Playwrights Under Siege](#) in 2022 and 2023 in partnership with the Arts Club of Washington. VFP is poised to announce a robust fall and winter of new programming in a subsequent release.

<https://www.voicesfestivalproductions.com/>