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Shotgun Players and TheatreFIRST present *Far, Far Better Things*, by Geetha Reddy, directed by Katja Rivera, at Live Oak Theater

"For the typical average, busy, distracted American, what does being courageous even look like?"

—Geetha Reddy, *Far Far Better Things* playwright

Berkeley, CA – Inspired by Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*, Geetha Reddy's new play tells the story of two women—a Latina domestic worker and a young South Asian doctor—separated by class, race, and the unspoken rules of modern womanhood. See what happens when these two women strive to balance their responsibilities to their children, to themselves, and to each other. ***Far, Far Better Things* begins on Thursday, April 25; press night Sunday, April 28; and runs through Sunday, May 19, 2019, at Live Oak Theater.**

Patrick Dooley, Shotgun Players' artistic director, and Jon Tracy, TheatreFirst's artistic facilitator and long-time Shotgun Players company member, give background on how the co-production between Shotgun Players and TheatreFIRST came together. Patrick Dooley says, "Jon Tracy originally came to Shotgun back in 2015 with the proposal that we commission a play by his longtime friend and collaborator, Geetha Reddy. In 2016, Jon became the artistic facilitator at TheatreFIRST and began shaking up development models for new work. As Geetha's play evolved, we realized we had an ideal opportunity to join forces with TheatreFIRST to create something special. We're excited to partner with director Katja Rivera, a band of excellent artists, and this special East Bay company that shares our passionate, pioneering spirit." Jon Tracy says, "*Far, Far Better Things* had been in development at Shotgun for years thanks to the Gerbode-Hewlett Foundation's 2015 Theater Commissioning Awards Initiative. But there is only so much you can find out about your play through readings and workshops. With Shotgun and TheatreFIRST working together, we can bring this important new work on class and intersectionality to the next level."

***Far, Far Better Things* is a modern, feminist remake of Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*.** Commenting on the production, Playwright Geetha Reddy says, "I have always been fascinated by Charles Dickens and the contradictions he presents as writer and moralist. Women are essential to the story in *A Tale of Two Cities*, but only as stereotypes that provide questionable moral absolutes. But what if I re-told *A Tale of Two Cities* from the point of view of the female characters? This has evolved into a reimagining of the female archetypes from *A Tale of Two Cities* as two present-day American women. By placing them in the current day and swapping the insanity of the French Revolution for our own political instability, I try to explore what the urgency of revolution might look like in everyday lives."

The cast of *Far, Far Better Things* features **Yohana Ansari-Thomas, Michelle Navarrete, Neiry Rojo, and Kimiya Shokri**. The creative team features set/prop design by **Randy Wong-Westbrook**, lighting design by **Stephanie Anne Johnson**, costume design by **Nikki Anderson-Joy**, stage management by **Alex Dillon**, and sound design by **Kristoffer Barrera**.

More at shotgunplayers.org/online/article/far-far-better.

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Bios

Geetha Reddy, Playwright

Geetha Reddy is a playwright and filmmaker working in the Bay Area. Her plays *Safe House* and *On a Wonderverse* were selected for the Bay Area Playwrights Festival. *Safe House* premiered at SF Playhouse. She wrote *HeLa* (TheatreFIRST) in collaboration with Lauren Gunderson and *Blastosphere!* (Central Works Theater) with Aaron Loeb. *Me Given You*, *Girl in a Box*, and *On a Wonderverse* were part of the Playwright's Foundation's In the Rough reading series. Her plays have also appeared in the San Francisco Fringe Festival, the Santa Rosa Quickies Festival, the Best of PlayGround Festival, the Just Theatre Lab series, and the Crowded Fire Matchbox series. Her short film *Obit* appeared at LA Shorts, NY Indie Fest, Bend Film Festival, the GI Film Festival, and many others. She is a five-time recipient of PlayGround's Emerging Playwright Award and a June Anne Baker Prize winner. Geetha is a member of the Dramatist's Guild and a former resident playwright at the Playwright's Foundation, and she is currently under commission (through the Gerbode Foundation) on an adaptation of *A Tale of Two Cities* for Shotgun Players and TheatreFIRST.

Katja Rivera, Director

Katja Rivera, a proud Los Angeles native, studied theatre at LA City College Theatre Academy and the Drama Studio London at Berkeley. After getting her Equity card she took a ten year mommy hiatus from acting, returning with Shotgun's production of *Silence* and the *Storyteller*. Other Shotgun productions include *Three Sisters* (Anfisa), *We Won't Pay* (Antonia), and *King Lear* (the Fool). She's also acted with the Magic Theatre, Theatre Rhinoceros, Center Rep, and Geoffrey Chaucer & Co. Her directing debut was with Shotgun Players (*The Winged Man*). She directed *Animal* and *Kiss* in Shotgun's Champagne Staged Reading Series. Other directing credits include Eastenders Rep, Subterranean Shakespeare, Boxcar Theatre, Quantum Dragon, Douglas Morrison, Custom Made, RPE in Danville, and SF Playground. She is proud to be a member of AEA, Shotgun Players, and SF Playground. *The Invisible Project*, which she cowrote with Evelyn Jean Pine, is in development with SF Playground.



Calendar Listing

WHAT: Inspired by Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*, Geetha Reddy's new play tells the story of two women—a Latina domestic worker and a young South Asian doctor—separated by class, race, and the unspoken rules of modern womanhood. See what happens when these two women strive to balance their responsibilities to their children, to themselves, and to each other.

WHEN: Thursday, April 25–Sunday, May 19, 2019

WHERE: [Live Oak Theater, 1301 Shattuck Ave, Berkeley](#)

TICKET PRICES: Tickets: \$10–\$30. No one turned away for lack of funds. Advance reservations strongly advised. Shows will sell out!

For more information, go to shotgunplayers.org/online/article/far-far-better.

About Shotgun Players

Shotgun Players is a company of artists determined to create bold, relevant, affordable theatre that inspires and challenges audience and artist alike to re-examine our lives, our community, and the ever-changing world around us.

More at shotgunplayers.org.

About TheatreFIRST

TheatreFIRST is an art-as-activism organization investigating new models of equitable representation through our development-based new works process. From development to production, our artistic, creative, and production teams are at minimum two-thirds people of color, half female identified, and one-third LGBTQIA2. By building all work from the ground up, our staff and board can best explore how to center, lift, and amplify historically marginalized storytellers. Making theatre a place where social and economic justice happens means breaking down perceived barriers, implementing equal access to resources, creating sanctuary for the unheard, and demanding a new direction for a shared future.

More at theatrefirst.com.