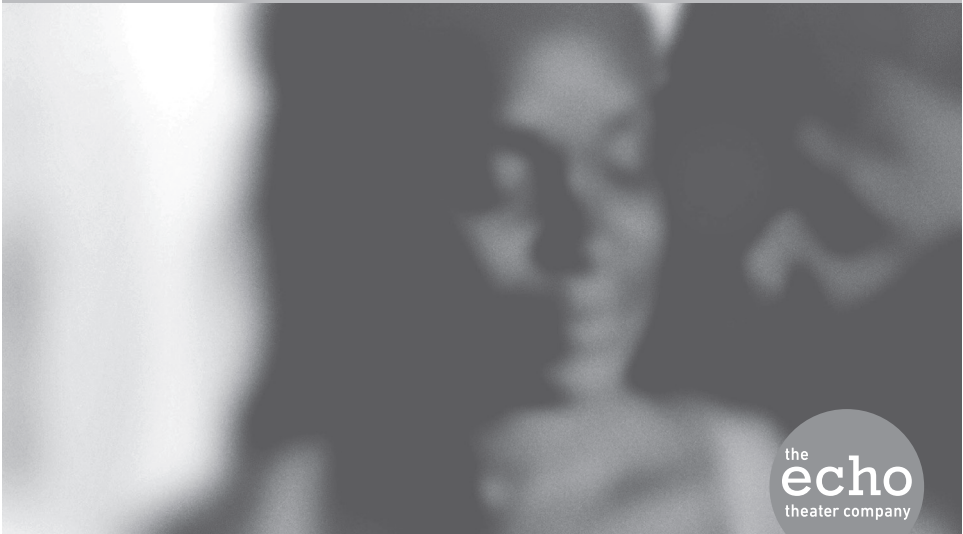


THE ECHO THEATER COMPANY
PRESENTS A WEST COAST PREMIERE

BERTA, BERTA

BY ANGELICA CHÉRI DIRECTED BY ANDI CHAPMAN



the
echo
theater company

The Echo Theater Company

PRESENTS

BERTA, BERTA

by Angelica Chéri

Directed by Andi Chapman

WITH

DeJuan Christopher Kacie Rogers

SCENIC DESIGN

Amanda Knehans

COSTUME DESIGN

Wendell Carmichael

LIGHTING DESIGN

Andrew Schmedake

SOUND DESIGN

Jeff Gardner

ASST. DIRECTOR

Jessica Williams

PRODUCTION
STAGE MANAGER

Bianca Rickheim

PUBLICITY

Lucy Pollak

PRODUCED BY

Joy DeMichelle and Chris Fields

Atwater Village Theater

July 19–August 25, 2025



Set, Lights, Costume and Sound Designers in this theater are represented by United Scenic Artists Local 829 of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees.



Berta, Berta is supported, in part, by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors through the Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture.

CAST

Leroy **DeJuan Christopher**

Berta **Kacie Rogers**

STAFF

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Development Associate **Sydney Lee** | Marketing Associate **Makaela Vogel**

Associate Literary Manager **Zoe Walpole** | Photography **Steven Strobel, Makela Yopez**

Graphic Design **Christopher Komuro** | Technical Director **Justin Huen** | Electrician **Jun Bernal**

The video and/or audio recording of this performance by any means whatsoever are strictly prohibited.

BERTA, BERTA



DeJuan Christopher (Leroy) is excited to make his debut with the Echo. His portrayal of Roosevelt Hicks in August Wilson's *Radio Golf* earned DeJuan nominations for a NAACP Theatre Award as Best Supporting Actor

and a StageSceneLA Award for Outstanding Featured Performance in a Drama. DeJuan starred in the acclaimed short film *Malleable*, executively produced by Lena Waithe, which premiered at Tribeca Film Festival and can be seen on Hulu. DeJuan can be seen in an upcoming AT&T commercial alongside Emmy and Golden Globe winner Sarah Paulson.



Kacie Rogers (Berta) is a two-time NAACP Award-winning writer, producer, and actor. She co-founded Bottle Tree Theatre Co. in 2024, producing acclaimed work in Los Angeles and at the Edinburgh Fringe. Her

award-winning short film *SHOUT* screened in over 10 cities across two countries. She has two films in development, including *X Marks the Spot*, winner of the Big Indie Fellowship at the Austin Film Festival. Her playwriting credits include *Oladele or The Forgotten Song* (IAMA New Works Festival) and *I Sell Windows* (Outside In, Edinburgh Fringe), developed through the Shay Fellowship. A graduate of AMDA, Kacie has worked with leading companies including The Robey Theatre Co., IAMA, The Getty Villa, The Echo, The Geffen, and Center Theatre Group, where her self-written short *Ol' Auntie Jemmie* streamed to audiences. On screen, she has appeared in several television shows, including *Curb Your Enthusiasm* and *Grace & Frankie*.

Angelica Chéri (Playwright) is a playwright, bookwriter & lyricist, screenwriter and poet. Her plays include *The Seeds of Abraham* (Billie Holiday Theatre), *The Sting of White Roses* (National Black Theatre Festival) and *Crownation* (National Black Theatre), *Berta, Berta* (Contemporary American Theatre Festival; Everyman Theatre) and *The Wiring & the Switches* (Geffen Writers Group). Angelica

and collaborator Ross Baum received the Richard Rodgers Award for their musical *Gun & Powder* (Signature Theatre). Angelica is co-writer of the *Highway to Heaven* series reboot on the Lifetime Network and story producer for Season 2 of *Dear...* on Apple TV+. Angelica received her BA in Theatre from UCLA, MFA in Playwriting from Columbia University and MFA in Musical Theatre Writing from NYU.

Andi Chapman (Director) is the Associate Artistic Director of The Ebony Repertory Theatre. Her Directing credits include: *Macbeth*, Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* at A Noise Within Theatre. *This Bright Wilderness* (A celebration of Black Theater at the Mark Taper Forum), *SHE*, World Premiere at the Antaeus Theatre; *BOTH AND*, World Premiere at The Boston Court Theatre & The Wallis Theatre. The critically acclaimed *Native Son*, Antaeus & Kirk Douglas Theatre, Garnering Best Director nominations (Stage Raw & Broadway World). Ebony Repertory Theatre's *The Gospel at Colonus*, which Garnered 14 Ovation Nominations including Best Play and Best Play Direction, and won the NAACP Theatre Award of 2016 for Best Production. Ms. Chapman is a graduate The Yale School of Drama, The AFI DWW, and is a participant in the Lincoln Center Director's Lab.

Amanda Knehans (Scenic Design) is a Los Angeles based designer for theatre and film. Theatre credits include *Crabs in a Bucket*, *Poor Clare*, and *The Wolves* (The Echo), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *As You Like It* (Off Square Theatre), and *Year of the Rooster* and *Welcome to the White Room* (Theatre of Note). Film credits include Art Director on *George and Tammy* (Showtime), *Barry* Season 4 (HBO), *The Santa Clause* Season 2 (Disney), *Paradise* (Hulu), and *Purple Hearts* (Netflix). Amanda is a member of the Art Directors Guild and USA 829.

Wendell Carmichael (he/him) (Costume Design) is an LA-based Costume Designer/educator with previous design credits at Center Theatre Group — Mark Taper, Kirk Douglas, Laguna Playhouse, Geffen Playhouse, Ebony Repertory Theatre Company, Collaborative Artist Bloc, Lobby Theatre, Antaeus Theatre Company, Boston Court Theatre, Kansas City Repertory

Theatre, Rogue Machine, Matrix Theatre, Southcoast Repertory Theatre, La Mirada Theatre, Warehouse Theatre, Skylight Theatre Company, Lower Depth Theatre, Chance Theater Company, and others. University and Colleges APU, USC, UCLA, University of Pomona, Chapman College and University of Lavern productions: Three time LA Critic's Choice nominee, 2023 and 2018 Stage Raw winner—Costume Design. Three-time L.A. Ovation Award nominee. 2017 Orange County's Best Costume Designs. 2015 NAACP Theatre Award winner. Member of Local 768. His work can be viewed on social media WynningzbyWyndell.

Andrew Schmedake (Lighting Design) is a lighting designer for the arts, live entertainment and branded activations. Past work includes collaborations with Ensemble Theatre Company Santa Barbara, The Wallis Annenberg, A Noise Within, Center Theatre Group and South Coast Rep alongside projects for Disney, National Geographic, Warner Discovery, Spotify, Fenty Beauty, Blizzard Entertainment and many more. He is the proud recipient of the LA Stage Alliance Ovation Award, LA Drama Critics Circle Award, and the NAACP Theatre Award. He holds an MFA from Carnegie Mellon University. www.schmedakelightingdesign.com

Jeff Gardner (Sound Design) is an award-winning sound designer, foley artist and actor. Jeff has designed and performed throughout the country including the Cleveland Playhouse, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Baltimore Center Stage, Denver Center for the Performing Arts, The Old Globe, Mark Taper Forum, Geffen Playhouse, The Kirk Douglas, The Wallis, A Noise Within, Antaeus Theatre Company, Circle X Theatre, IAMA Theatre, The Shakespeare Theatre (DC), Arena Stage, The Kennedy Center, Williamstown Theatre Festival as well as the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in Scotland. Online: jeffthomasgardner.net

Joy DeMichelle (she/her) (Producer) recently appeared in *Macbeth* at A Noise Within and *Greenwood 1964* at Greenway Theatre. Her regional stage credits include South Coast Rep, Round House Theatre, Mark Taper Forum, Denver Center and more. Select TV appearances:

Grey's Anatomy, *Snowfall*, *All American*, *The L Word: Generation Q*, and *For the People*. Recent intimacy direction: *Bacon* at the Rogue Theatre and *Jelly's Last Jam* at Pasadena Playhouse, intimacy director and department workshops at USC, Chapman and CSULB. MFA from Mason Gross School of the Arts: Rutgers University and BFA for NCA & T. Visit www.JoyDeMichelle.com for more info.

Chris Fields (Producer) is founding Artistic Director of The Echo Theater Company. He also founded and was Artistic Director of the Ojai Playwrights Conference. Most recently, he directed *One Jewish Boy* by Stephen Laughton and *Clarkston* by Samuel D. Hunter, produced *Dido of Idaho*, *Crabs In A Bucket*, *A Thin Place* and directed the world premiere of Jessica Goldberg's LADCC award winning *BABE*, all for The Echo. He has won Ovation, LADCC, Stage Raw and LA Weekly Awards. As an actor, he has appeared on and off Broadway, regionally, in film and on TV. He taught at SUNY Purchase and maintains a private workshop class in Los Angeles.

Jessica E. Williams (Assistant Director) has worked with Andi Chapman for over a decade, including: The World Premiere of *SHE* (Antaeus Theatre Company), *Macbeth* (A Noise Within), and is honored to work on *Berta*, *Berta* at The Echo. She is the assistant director for Support Black Theatre's August Wilson New Voices Monologue Competition (Los Angeles), a directing member of the Actors Studio West: Play Development Unit and Directors Unit for four seasons. She is a graduate of the University of Southern California and Full Sail University.

Bianca Martucci Rickheim (Production Stage Manager) is a graduate of LMU with a MA in English with an emphasis in Creative Writing and is pursuing her passion for theater. Bianca can be seen stage managing regularly at Pacific Resident Theatre, The Broadwater and the Echo Theatre Company. Her most recent credits include *A Permanent Image*, *Nightingale*, *One Jewish Boy*, and *Fostered*. Thank you to this team for this opportunity, my friends and family for all their support.

DONORS

The Echo would like to thank the following for their generosity in helping to make this production possible:

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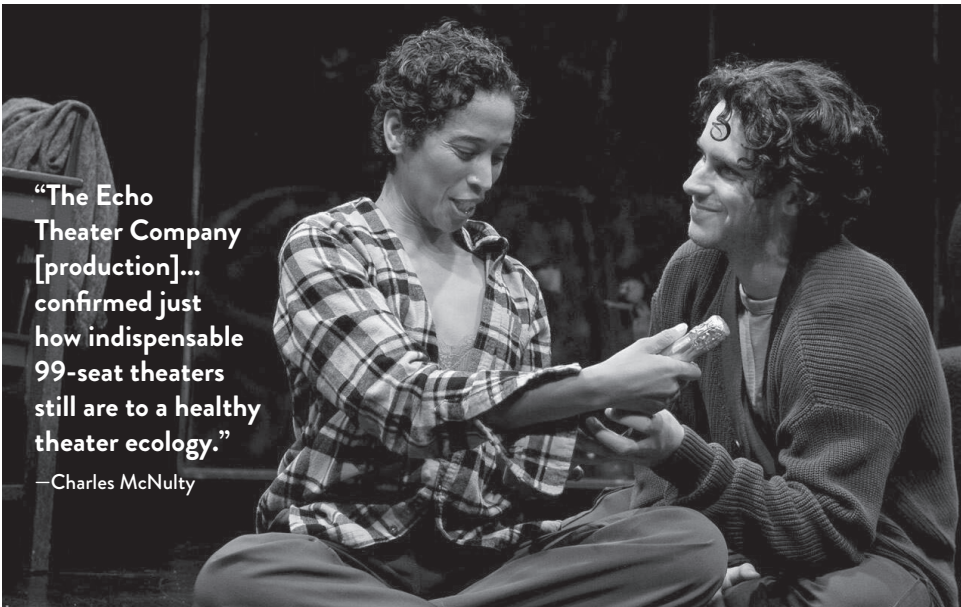
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“The Echo Theater Company [production]... confirmed just how indispensable 99-seat theaters still are to a healthy theater ecology.”

—Charles McNulty

ONE JEWISH BOY. Photo by Cooper Bates



Dedicated to nurturing writers and producing new work, the Echo, over its 27 years, has presented 101 Los Angeles premiere productions. Of these, 81 were world premieres and of those, 52 were commissions. Most recently the company produced *One Jewish Boy* by Stephen Laughton, *Clarkston* by Samuel D. Hunter, LADCC award Best Writing, Abby Rosebrock's *Dido of Idaho*, two LADCC awards, *How It's Gon' Be* by JuCoby Johnson, Bernardo Cubria's *Crabs In A Bucket*, LADCC award Best Writing, *The Thin Place* by Lucas Hnath and Jessica Goldberg's *BABE*, the LADCC award Best Writing, *Hooded* by Terrance Arvelle Chisholm, and Chiara Atik's *Poor Clare*, which won 8 LADCC Awards. We were also given the Margaret Harford Award for Excellence in Theater by the LADCC. Anthony Brynes of KCRW said: "Echo theatre company is on a fierce journey. They are choosing plays that are consistently challenging and all have a deep conscience... If you wanted to pick one small theatre to add to your cultural roster —Echo is the consistent favorite."

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