



## IAMA THEATRE COMPANY NAMES AGYEIWAA ASANTE AS 2026 RECIPIENT OF SHONDA RHIMES-SPONSORED UNSUNG VOICES PLAYWRITING COMMISSION

LOS ANGELES, CA (7 April 2026) — **IAMA Theatre Company**, committed to cultivating new voices and creating new, boundary-pushing work, has selected **Agyeiwaa Asante** as the 2026 recipient of the Los Angeles-based theatre company’s **The Rhimes Unsung Voices Playwriting Commission**, sponsored by IAMA Patron of the Arts **Shonda Rhimes** (“Grey’s Anatomy,” “Scandal,” “Bridgerton”).

“Agyeiwaa is a remarkable playwright, who takes the deeply truthful and personal explorations of her characters and makes them beautifully universal,” said IAMA Literary Manager **Celia Mandela Rivera**. “She is more than deserving of this opportunity and we are thrilled the IAMA community gets to join her on this artistic journey.”

Now in its ninth year, **The Rhimes Unsung Voices Playwriting Commission** was created to nurture emerging playwrights with an emphasis on cultural inclusion and fresh creativity in theatre. This commission supports a writer from an underrepresented community, who has been minimally professionally produced, but not had a commercial, Off-Broadway, or Broadway production of their work.

“As a playwright, and really any theatre artist, we’ve seen resources and opportunities shrink and disappear before our eyes over the last few years. It’s such a kindness and blessing to have an organization like IAMA Theatre Company still so dedicated to supporting voices like mine to thrive and create,” shared **Agyeiwaa Asante**. “I’m so excited for this chapter and to continue to connect with the thriving LA theatre community.”

**Agyeiwaa Asante** is a Ghanaian American playwright and administrator based in the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia area (DMV). Her full-length plays include and have been developed with, *DAINTY* (BOLD NYC's 2020 Festival, Mosaic Theatre, Playwrights Realm's Scratchpad series, Firehouse Theatre), *AGAPE; or The Church Play* (Cygnet's Finish Line Commission, Round House's National Capital New Play Festival, Boston Court Pasadena's Playwrights Group), and *The Half-Sibling Play* (Fire This Time Festival, MOXIE Theatre's Lamoise New Works Festival). She holds commissions from the University of Maryland's NextNow Festival, Single Carrot Theatre, and Round House Theatre. She is the 2020 recipient of The Bret Adams and Paul Reisch Foundation's Ollie Award and a member of The Kilroys Web 2023 and The Playwrights Cohort at PlayPenn. Asante received her B.A. in Theatre from the University of Maryland, College Park and her M.F.A. in Playwriting from UC San Diego.

Past recipients of **The Rhimes Unsung Voices Playwriting Commission** include TV writer and playwright **Alicia Carroll**; IAMA Ensemble Member **Brian Otaño**; playwright and activist **Geraldine Inoa**; Iranian-American playwright **Sanaz Toossi**, who went on to receive a Pulitzer Prize; Obie-winning performer/playwright **Ryan J. Haddad**; Emmy-nominated writer, director and producer **Larry Powell**; celebrated actor, director and playwright **June Carryl**; and Chinese-Canadian playwright, TV writer, screenwriter **Chloé Hung**.

The Rhimes Foundation was established in 2016 to support arts, education and activism, with a focus on promoting cultural inclusion and fighting inequality. IAMA has been a recipient since 2016 of The Rhimes Foundation, led by legendary television producer and screenwriter Shonda Rhimes, a frequent IAMA audience member and supporter. Through The Rhimes Foundation, funds for the Commission as well as other important support for IAMA's mission and programming have been provided. In 2017, Rhimes was named IAMA's inaugural Patron of the Arts.

### **ABOUT IAMA THEATRE COMPANY**

Founded in 2007, **IAMA Theatre Company** is a Los Angeles-based ensemble of artists committed to cultivating new voices, creating new works that push boundaries and take risks, and fostering an inclusive community that inspires a new generation of theatremakers and audiences. Designated by *Playbill* as "one of 20 regional houses every theater lover must know," "an LA intimate theater gem" by *KCRW*, and a "creative force on the local theatre scene" by the

*Los Angeles Times*, the award-winning company is dedicated to developing and producing new plays and musicals by emerging and established playwrights, including over 40 world, West Coast and Los Angeles premieres. Recent Broadway productions that first started at IAMA include Max Wolf Friedlich's *JOB* and Leslye Headland's *Cult of Love*. The backbone of the company, IAMA's Ensemble Members have been featured in numerous critically acclaimed TV shows and films, as well as a vast array of theatre and live performances on and Off-Broadway, across the country, and around the world. IAMA is invested in challenging audiences with authentic experiences that reflect the complex modern world.

**ABOUT RHIMES UNSUNG VOICES COMMISSION & THE RHIMES FOUNDATION**

Sponsored and inspired by groundbreaking producer and writer **Shonda Rhimes** and **The Rhimes Foundation**, **The Rhimes Unsung Voices Playwriting Commission** supports a writer from an underrepresented community who has been minimally professionally produced but not had a commercial, Off-Broadway, or Broadway production of their work. Writers who are actively pursuing a career in the theatre are strongly considered.

**The Rhimes Foundation** was established in 2016 by writer/producer Shonda Rhimes and her family. The foundation was created to support arts, education, and activism with a focus on promoting cultural inclusion, fighting for equality, and standing up against bigotry of any kind.

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**PRESS:** Courtney Heimbeck, CBCO Public Relations & Marketing,  
[courtney@cb-pr.com](mailto:courtney@cb-pr.com) | 818-298-6275

**PHOTOS:** Downloadable high-res photos are available here:  
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