



BROWN

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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Brown University Theatre Presents** ***By The Way, Meet Vera Stark***

Brown University Department of Theatre Arts and Performance Studies and Sock & Buskin present the first show of their 2016–17 season. **By The Way, Meet Vera Stark** by Lynn Nottage '86 is a satirical comedy set in glamorous 1930s Hollywood, the revolutionary 1970s, and the present day. Inspired by screwball comedies of the early twentieth century, the show tells the story of Vera Stark, a fictional Black actor struggling to break into the Hollywood studio system. She finds unexpected fame, but at what price?

**By The Way, Meet Vera Stark** introduces us to Vera, Gloria, Lottie, and Anna Mae—four aspiring actresses trying to find their big break in the movies. When a studio announces casting for a new historical Southern blockbuster, a scramble for parts begins. Doing whatever it takes to land the role, mayhem ensues as they do what they have to do to make their way to the top.

Cut to the present day and a panel of “experts” is holding a conference to discuss the legacy of Vera Stark’s film career. Battling her whole life against the very system she fought so hard to get into shaped Vera Stark’s work and her life. What will a group of academics today think about that telling interview in the 1970s where Vera finally cut loose? And what secrets lie beneath the surface of her life?

Speaking about this production, director Kym Moore said:

I am thrilled to be directing this fantastic script! Lynn Nottage's play provides a delightful astute perspective on the complex game of identity, especially as it is played in Hollywood. Given the inspiring conversations taking place across campus regarding these issues, we believe this play is a great way to open the season. The writing crackles with wit and raucous good humor that simultaneously entertains and challenges perceptions of Hollywood, past and present. Our cast is drawn from all over campus and these talented young actors are bringing a wonderful sense of play, vulnerability, and insight to their respective roles. **By The Way, Meet Vera Stark** is a fast-paced and delectable walk through the glamour and the underbelly of those old-time Hollywood movies we all love.

This year's season grew out of ongoing conversations on campus at Brown University about issues of diversity and inclusion. Sock & Buskin, the student-faculty board that selects the Brown University Theatre season, wanted to represent this conversation through their choice of plays, writers, directors, and casting. The season aims to reflect the strengths and the challenges that students face in making contemporary performances that embrace diversity and can effect social change.

**By The Way, Meet Vera Stark** runs September 29 to October 2 and October 6 to 9 in Leeds Theatre on the main campus at Brown University (83 Waterman Street, Providence, RI 02912). Performances take place Thursday through Saturday at 8pm, and 2pm on Sundays.

Brown University Theatre's 2016–17 performance season is produced by Brown University Department of Theatre Arts and Performance Studies and by Sock & Buskin, a student-faculty board that has an unbroken record of producing theatre at Brown University for over 100 years.

Tickets are \$15 (adults) / \$12 (seniors) / \$7 (students). For more information visit [brown.edu/theatre](http://brown.edu/theatre). To book tickets, call (401) 863-2838, or visit the Box Office in the Leeds Theatre Lobby (83 Waterman Street, Providence, RI 02912), Tuesday–Friday from 12–4pm during the semester, or email [boxoffice@brown.edu](mailto:boxoffice@brown.edu). To book online, visit: [brown.edu/tickets](http://brown.edu/tickets).

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