

# CLEAN BREAK

## PRESS RELEASE

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## CLEAN BREAK ANNOUNCES NEW ASSOCIATE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AND PATRON

Clean Break is delighted to announce two new appointments, as director and playwright **Lakesha Arie-Angelo** joins the company from March 2024 in the newly created role of **Associate Artistic Director** and award-winning actor **Michelle Greenidge** becomes a **Patron** with immediate effect.

**Lakesha Arie-Angelo** is a theatre director, writer, dramaturg, facilitator and, most recently, Associate Director at Soho Theatre. In her role within Soho Theatre, Lakesha co-led the Writers Lab programme and was lead programmer of theatre in the Upstairs Studio space. Her credits as a Director include *The Color Purple* (2022 UK tour, for Leicester Curve and Birmingham Hippodrome; Nominated for 2023 Black British Theatre Award for Best Musical Production); *Sikisa-Life of the Party* (Pleasance Theatre Edinburgh, Soho Theatre); *Shuck 'n' Jive* and *soft animals* (Soho Theatre); *Summer Fest* and *Alive Day* (The Bunker Theatre); and *The Hoes* (Hampstead Theatre).

As Associate Artistic Director, Lakesha will be part of Clean Break's leadership team working closely with Artistic Director Anna Herrmann to shape and achieve the organisation's artistic vision and strategy. As part of a new structure to ensure a plurality of voices at senior level, Lakesha will collaborate with colleagues, artists, Members, and partners to drive forward and enrich Clean Break's voice and influence across theatre.

Actor **Michelle Greenidge** performed in Clean Break's production *House* by Somalia Seaton (at Edinburgh Festival Fringe and The Yard Theatre, 2016) and as part of *Rebel Voices On Stage* (at Donmar Warehouse), a staged event launching Rebel Voices, an anthology of monologues from 40 Clean Break plays. Her stage credits also include *Nine Night* at the National Theatre (for which she won Best Supporting Female Actor in a Play at the inaugural Black British Theatre Awards and was nominated at The Stage Debut Awards for Best West End Debut), and *debbie tucker green's ear for eye* at the Royal Court Theatre. Her television roles include Lola in *Mandy* (BBC) and Valerie in *Afterlife* (Netflix). This winter she joins the cast of the much-anticipated new series of *Doctor Who* with her first episode airing on Christmas Day.

Michelle joins Clean Break's patrons among a group of passionate advocates which includes, among others, Zawe Ashton, Sharon Duncan Brewster, Baroness Helena Kennedy KC, Lucy Kirkwood, and Dame Harriet Walter DBE.

**Lakesha Arie-Angelo:** *"It fills me with great pride and excitement to be joining such a respected and beloved company as Clean Break. To work alongside the executive team as Associate Artistic Director is a great new endeavour where I hope to further the important and innovative work Clean Break does. I first came to Clean Break some years ago as a volunteer, then as a facilitator on an education programme, so, to return as a creative lead within the organisation is a wonderful full circle moment. I look forward to championing the Clean Break community and creating positively impactful work and practices. Watch this space!"*

**Michelle Greenidge:** *"Clean Break has been so important to me on so many levels that to be made a Patron is not only a great honour but also a true responsibility to respect the life changing work that this incredible charity does. Working with Clean Break, on stage and through workshops at their studios and in prisons, has been an awesome and humbling experience and truly changed the course of my career."*

*It is through the opportunity for so many women to tell their stories, be they redemptive, cathartic, or just a damn good tale, that Clean Break has changed so many lives and been such an incredible force for good over the last 44 years and I have no doubt, for as long as it is needed and supported it will continue to do, its most incredible work. As a Patron, it goes without saying, I hope to pass on the support Clean Break has given me, as many times over as possible and to continue to raise awareness and spread the news of the superb work Clean Break does, as widely as possible."*

**Anna Herrmann, Artistic Director/Joint CEO:** *"I am truly delighted to welcome both these brilliant women artists to Clean Break. Lakesha has been connected to the company over the years in various guises and being able to collaborate with her in this new leadership role is wonderful. I know she gets our focus on care and inclusion and brings a wealth of skills and experience that will support us making exciting new work in the future. Michelle has shown her unwavering support for the company since we first worked together in 2016. She brings her open heart to every interaction with us, and we are hugely grateful for her commitment to championing us as a Patron."*

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#### **NOTES TO EDITORS:**

Clean Break changes lives and changes minds through theatre – on stage, in prison and in the community. It produces ground-breaking plays with women's voices at the heart of its work. Founded in 1979 by two women in prison who believed that theatre could bring the hidden stories of women who are criminalised to a wider audience, it remains true to these roots: inspiring playwrights and captivating audiences with the company's award-winning plays on the complex theme of women and criminalisation. Its commissioned playwrights have included Alice Birch, Deborah Bruce, Lin Coghlan, E V Crowe, Vivienne Franzmann, Tanika Gupta, Katie Hims, Sam Holcroft, Theresa Ikoko, Lucy Kirkwood, Chloë Moss, Rebecca Lenkiewicz, Winsome Pinnock, and Rebecca Prichard.

Recent Clean Break productions include *Hope* (a film available on Clean Break Knowledge Hub at [www.cleanbreak.org.uk](http://www.cleanbreak.org.uk)), *Dixon and Daughters* (by Deborah Bruce at National Theatre), *Blis-ta* (an audio drama by the late Sonya Hale, BBC Audio Drama Award winner), *Sweatbox* (a film of Chloë Moss's acclaimed play set in a prison van). Recent productions include *Catch* (a small-scale touring play by Sonya Jalaly), *Favour* by Ambreen Razia (Bush Theatre), *Typical Girls* by Morgan Lloyd Malcolm (Sheffield Crucible) and *More Than We Can Bear* by Eno Mfron (part of *The Keyworkers Cycle*, Almeida Theatre). In 2021, the company presented *I am a theatre*, a retrospective exhibition at Swiss Cottage Gallery celebrating four decades of the company and launched a digital archive on its website in 2022.

#### **Full biographies:**

**Lakesha Arie-Angelo** is a Theatre Director, Writer, Dramaturg, Facilitator and mostly recently Associate Director at Soho Theatre. In her role within Soho Theatre, Lakesha co-led the Writers Lab programme and was lead programmer of theatre in the Upstairs Studio space.

Work as a Director includes: *The Color Purple* (2022 UK tour, for Leicester Curve and Birmingham Hippodrome; Nominated for 2023 Black British Theatre Award for Best Musical Production); *Sikisa-Life of the Party* (Pleasance Theatre Edinburgh, Soho Theatre); *Shuck 'n' Jive* and *soft animals* (Soho Theatre); *Summer Fest* and *Alive Day* (The Bunker Theatre); *The Hoes* (Hampstead Theatre), *AS:NT* (Theatre503 - as part of Rapid Write Response) and *Prodigal* (Bush Theatre - for 'Artistic Directors of the Future Black Lives: Black Words'). As Staff Director: *Trouble in Mind* (National Theatre). As Assistant Director at Soho includes *The One*; *Touch*; *Blueberry Toast* and *Roller Diner* (2017 West End Wilma Award for Best Comedy). As Resident Assistant Director at Finborough Theatre: *P'Yongyang* and *Treasure*.

As Playwright: *The Ancestors* (National Youth Theatre) *Graveyard Gang* (Richmix, Poplar Union and community tour).

As Dramaturg: *Aftertaste* by Ciara Elizabeth Smyth (National Youth Theatre Ireland), *Everyday* by Paula Garfield (New Diorama Theatre)"

**Michelle Greenidge** is a British actor of Jamaican and Bajan heritage who is widely recognised for her stand-out performances in a number of well-regarded stage and screen productions. She is perhaps best known for her starring role as Valerie in the black comedy-drama series *After Life* created by Ricky Gervais for Netflix as well as her turn in Diane Morgan's BBC Two comedy *Mandy* in which she plays Mandy's best friend Lola. Other notable roles include playing series regular Judith in the Sky police comedy-drama *Code 404* alongside Stephen Graham and Daniel Mays, Rosa in the Channel 4's *It's A Sin* and Grace, Arabella's mother, in the multi award-winning BBC One/HBO series *I May Destroy You*.

Michelle will next be seen in the much-anticipated fourteenth series of *Doctor Who* coming to the BBC and Disney+ this Winter and into 2024. Under the new show runner Russell T Davies (*It's A Sin*) the series will feature David Tennant as the Fourteenth Doctor for the specials, with Ncuti Gatwa (*Sex Education*) taking over the Tardis as the Fifteenth Doctor. In the new year she will be seen as Aunt Maggie in Channel 4 and Disney's *Queenie*, based on the adaptation of the best-selling novels by Candice Carty-Williams and in the upcoming mythological dark-comedy Netflix series *Kaos* created by Charlie Covell and also starring Jeff Goldblum.

Greenidge's feature film credits include playing Nurse Emilia in the British comedy *My Happy Ending* with Andie MacDowell, Sally Phillips and David Walliams and Libby in the Netflix feature *The Art of Love*. She also starred as Mrs. Manning in *Mangrove*, the first film in Steve McQueen's critically acclaimed *Small Axe* series as well as roles in the Hollywood pictures *Venom: Let There Be Carnage* and *Cruella*.

On stage, Michelle attracted glowing reviews for her performance as Trudy in *Nine Night* at the National Theatre, which earned her a nomination in the Best West End Debut category at the Stage Debut Awards 2018. She then went on to win Best Supporting Female Actor in a Play at the inaugural Black British Theatre Awards in 2019 for the same role. She also starred in Debbie Tucker Green's *ear for eye* at the Royal Court Theatre in 2018 and *House* for Clean Break.