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## **KALEIDOSCOPE CROWN PREMIERES AT COCA, APRIL 11–13**

*New Play Written by Ashleigh Akilah Rucker Tells a Story of Self-Discovery*

**ST. LOUIS (March 25, 2025)**—[Kaleidoscope Crown](#), a new play written by Los Angeles-based playwright and artist Ashleigh Akilah Rucker, debuts at COCA, April 11–13. Inspired by the art and traditions of the African diaspora, this story follows a young girl on her journey to discover who she really is and learn to love what makes her unique. Performances are Friday, April 11 at 7:00 p.m., Saturday, April 12 at 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m., and Sunday, April 13 at 2:00 p.m.

The play tells a story of a young girl who awakens to a shocking new ability: with every new emotion, her hair transforms into vibrant, multicolor tresses. This change disrupts the uniformity and peace of her small traditional village, making her and the people around her rethink what beauty and individuality mean. The young girl learns to accept her what makes her special, showing the importance of building self-esteem and confidence.

“It’s exciting to direct *Kaleidoscope Crown* with such a talented team of creatives by my side. This production has gone from our first reading in 2022, through various workshops, and now, we are presenting a fully imagined production.” said Alicia Revé Like, Director of *Kaleidoscope Crown*. “Everyone’s ideas and hard work have been in full flow for months, and we can’t wait to bring this world to our audiences.”

*Kaleidoscope Crown* was partially developed through a series of readings and workshops that have engaged COCA’s COCAwrites pre-professional artists for the past two years as part of TYA/USA’s Reimagine: New Plays in TYA, a program that aims to support the development and visibility of new works for young audiences by playwrights of color.

*Kaleidoscope Crown* proudly features an all-Black cast and creative team, with the culture of the African diaspora at the forefront. The play includes original music by AhSa-Ti-Nu Tyehimba-Ford, choreography by Nyna Moore, set design by Seth Howard, costume design by Shevaré Perry, lighting design by Jayson Lawshee, and projections design by Yvonne Osei. The cast of *Kaleidoscope Crown* is comprised of three professional adult actors and seven COCA pre-professional artists.

Tickets to *Kaleidoscope Crown* are \$21 and may be purchased at [cocastl.org](http://cocastl.org) or by contacting the COCA Box Office at 314.561.4873. A group ticket rate is available for groups of 15 or more. ASL interpretation will be provided by DEAF, Inc. for the performance on Saturday, April 12 at 2:00 p.m. *Kaleidoscope Crown* is recommended for ages six and older.

Audiences are also invited to participate in an African Dance Workshop on Friday, April 11 at 8:15 p.m. Participants will engage in a high-energy, fun-filled class where they learn about the cultures of West Africa through traditional West African dance, djembe drumming, and storytelling. The workshop will be led by COCA Teaching Artist and Artistic Director of Afriky Lolo Diadié Bathily. Bathily is an accomplished dancer, choreographer, instructor, and costume designer. He has danced professionally for more than 30 years on stages in Africa, Europe, and North America. The African Dance Workshop is a ticketed event. Tickets are \$5 each and can be purchased at [cocastl.org](http://cocastl.org).

The 2024–2025 COCApresents Season is presented by Leading Sponsors Amy, Sadie, and Sacha Lefton and Supporting Sponsors Mercy, Missouri Arts Council, and Regional Arts Commission of St. Louis. *Kaleidoscope Crown* is also sponsored by Supporting Show Sponsors Kwame Building Group and SweetHead Naturals. Regions is the Schooltime Show Sponsor.

## **ABOUT COCA**

COCA's mission is to *enrich lives and build community through the arts*. With a commitment to equity and access, COCA serves as a regional hub for learning in and through the arts for all ages from all backgrounds. One of the most diverse cultural institutions in St. Louis, COCA serves more than 60,000 students, audience members, artists, and families from more than 250 zip codes across the St. Louis region every year. The fourth largest multi-disciplinary arts organization in the country, COCA is committed to supporting the vitality and creativity of more than 200 artists at the heart of their work in schools, community centers, local business, cultural organizations, and onsite at its campus in University City.

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