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Horizon Theatre Company Presents the New Comedy

## ***Designing Women 2020: The Big Split***

By Linda Bloodworth Thomason

***“Witty, sassy, sexy!” - BroadwayWorld***

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**(ATLANTA SEPTEMBER 2022) - Fashionable and fierce, the ladies of the smash-hit comedy series *Designing Women* are now live onstage at Horizon in this hilarious and timely new comedy set in Atlanta in fall 2020, *Designing Women - 2020: The Big Split*. Presidents and pandemics are the hot conversation points, and Julia and her partners at Sugarbaker’s interior design firm are now tackling 21st century challenges with wit, pluck, and style. The house of Sugarbaker may be divided this election season, but these Southern, smart, and sassy designing women prove that nothing truly unites us like laughter. Performances begin September 30, Press opening is Friday, October 7 and the play has an open-ended run, currently booking through November 6. Horizon is located in Little Five Points/Inman Park (1083 Austin Avenue N.E., Atlanta, GA 30307, at the corner of Euclid and Austin Avenues).**

This new take on *Designing Women* is “entertaining and full of social commentary” (Sarah Komar, *The Arkansas Traveler*). **Creator of the iconic TV series, playwright Linda Bloodworth Thomason, moves the story forward to today.** With characters from the series on stage along with new staff and love interests, **audiences will connect and laugh whether they are long-time fans or meeting these designing women for the first time.**

**Julia, Suzanne, Mary Jo and Charlene are back together again at Sugarbaker’s Interior Design Firm - just a few years older, re-married, divorced and widowed. It’s 2020 in Atlanta, the COVID-19 pandemic is causing a frenzy amongst small businesses and the politics are red-hot with the presidential election campaign in full swing. Julia (Katherine LaNasa) has a progressive podcast that is garnering a lot of attention from the public, and Suzanne’s (Beth Beyer) ex-husband (Luis Hernandez) is hosting a big Trump fundraiser, much to her sister’s horror. Mary Jo (Joanna Daniels) is an ardent convert to the #metoo movement and finding the courage to speak up against the patriarchy. Cleo (Tiffany Porter) is their new landscape designer, a former English teacher who’s Black, queer, and comfortable keeping Sugarbaker’s quite woke. And Charlene’s (Lane Carlock) baby sister, the evangelical and sheltered Haley (Eve Krueger), is the brand new receptionist getting**

her own exhilarating awakening with the frank and funny conversations that frequently happen at Sugarbaker's. An attractive contractor, Wynn Dollarhyde (Robin Bloodworth), is in pursuit of Julia, while her sister Suzanne wants him for herself. But when COVID strikes and everyone must isolate together, tensions rise and they must decide whether or not it is actually worth it to set their differences and pride aside for the sake of their sanity and their future.

**Playwright Linda Bloodworth Thomason is the creator/writer of the television series *Designing Women*, one of CBS Television's most successful comedy series.** She also created and served as Executive Producer (with husband Harry Thomason under their Mozark Productions) four other series, *Evening Shade*, *Hearts Afire*, *Women of the House* and *Emeril*. She has received numerous Emmy and Writers Guild nominations, as well as many civic and cultural awards (Nancy Susan Reynolds Award for Sexual Responsibility in the Media from the Center for Popular Options; the Humanitarian Award from Funders Concerned About AIDS, and more). She premiered *Designing Women, The Play* in 2021-22 with a co-production that played at TheatreSquared (Fayetteville, AR) and Arkansas Rep (Little Rock), starting its journey in the Ozarks where she and her husband grew up. That production also featured actor Katherine LaNasa as Julia Sugarbaker who reprises her role at Horizon.

**"What I really wanted to do was take those women as we last saw them and set them down right now," Bloodworth-Thomason said.** "They have the same history, are the same people, have the same attitudes, the same philosophies, but they're talking about #MeToo and the Kardashians and Donald Trump and all that's going on right now."

Directed by acclaimed Horizon Artistic Associate **Heidi McKerley** (the musical hit *Once* and 35+ other shows), this production features an ensemble of Horizon regulars and new faces, all Atlanta-based professional actors and designers from theatre, television, and film. Heidi has been nominated for fifteen Suzi Bass Awards and won for Best Director of a Musical in 2011 for *Avenue Q* at the Horizon. Her production of *Sunday in the Park with George* for the Jennie T. Anderson Concert Series won nine Broadway World Awards for 2021.

Leading off the cast as the elegant and eloquent founder of Sugarbaker's is **Katherine LaNasa** (Apple TV+'s *Truth Be Told*, Bravo/Netflix's *Imposters*, CW/HBO's *Katy Keene*), reprising the role of Julia Sugarbaker that she premiered at TheatreSquared/Arkansas Rep last season. Alongside her is **Beth Beyer** (Alliance's *A Christmas Carol*, Atlanta Lyric's *Singin in the Rain*) making her Horizon debut as Julia's sister, the sassy and politically incorrect Suzanne Sugarbaker. Quirky and outspoken Mary Jo is played by **Joanna Daniels** (Alliance's *Crossing Delancey*, Broadway Playhouse Chicago's *I Love Lucy*). **Lane Carlock** returns to Horizon (Horizon's *Project Dawn*, *Legacy of Light*) as the fourth design partner, sweet Charlene. Her enthusiastic sister Haley, played by **Eve Krueger** (Second City in Chicago, MFA in acting from Kent State University in 2022), is still learning the ropes as the freshest hire to the firm. And their new partner, Cleo Bouvier, played by **Tiffany Porter** (Horizon's *Elemeno Pea*, Atlanta Shakespeare Tavern, Weird Sisters Theatre Project) has taken over her cousin Anthony's stake in the business. Also back at Horizon are **Luis R. Hernandez** (Horizon's *How to Use a Knife*, *Madeline s Christmas*; Atlanta Lyric's *The Addams Family*) as Suzanne's ex-husband Caulder and **Robin Bloodworth** (Horizon's *Time Stands Still*, Alliance's *Nick s Flamingo Grill*) as the charismatic Wynn Dollarhyde.

The design team creating the Sugarbaker empire includes Horizon resident set designers, the multiple Suzi Award-winning **Moriah and Isabel Curley-Clay**, and Horizon resident lighting designer **Mary Parker**. They have designed all of Horizon's productions for the past 10+ years. **Dr. L. Nyrobi Moss** (*Square Blues*, *The Light*, *Sweet Water Taste*) costumes the women to encapsulate their iconic personalities in a modern fashion, and

**Jacqueline Moreno** is making a Horizon debut as the props master. Bailey Gafeney and Johnathan Taylor of **Multiband Studio** return to Horizon as our sound designers. **Topher Payne** who produced and played Julia Sugarbaker in numerous Atlanta productions of *Designing Women Live* (stage versions of the classic TV shows) rounds out the creative team by taking on the role of dramaturg.

Horizon Theatre Company's performances of *Designing Women* start September 30, 2022 (Press Opening October 7, 2022) for an open run, currently booking through November 6, 2022 at Horizon in Little Five Points/Inman Park (1083 Austin Avenue N.E., Atlanta, GA 30307, at the corner of Euclid and Austin Avenues). Free parking. Performances are Wed through Fri at 8 pm, Saturdays at 3 and 8 pm, Sundays at 5 pm. Tickets start at \$30 for weekdays, \$35 for weekends and \$40 for Saturday night. Weekday matinees available to groups of 50 or more on request. \$20 for full-time students under 25 with a valid student ID and \$3 off full-price tickets for Seniors. Prices are subject to change and will rise as performances fill up. Order early for the best prices.

For tickets and information, visit [www.horizontheatre.com](http://www.horizontheatre.com) or call 404-584-7450.

**For full bios for Actors and Creative team, see the links at**  
<https://www.horizontheatre.com/plays/designing-women/>

**For PR photos, go to** <https://www.flickr.com/photos/horizontheatre/albums/72177720302070745>

### CREATIVE TEAM

Playwright	Linda Bloodworth Thomason
Director	Heidi Cline McKerley
Co-Artistic/Producing Director	Lisa Adler
Dramaturg	Topher Payne
Set Designers	Isabel Curley-Clay & Moriah Curley-Clay
Costume Designer	Dr. L. Nyrobi Moss
Lighting Designer	Mary Parker
Sound Designers	Bailey Gafeney / Johnathan Taylor / Multiband Studio
Props Master	Jacqueline Moreno
Co-Artistic/Technical Director	Jeff Adler
Asst. Technical Director	Zabrina Corrales
Stage Manager	Joan McCarty*

### CAST

Julia	Katherine LaNasa*
Suzanne	Beth Beyer
Mary Jo	Joanna Daniels*
Charlene	Lane Carlock
Cleo	Tiffany Porter
Haley	Eve Krueger*
Caulder	Luis Hernandez
Wynn	Robin Bloodworth*

**UNDERSTUDIES**

Julia	Joanna Davis
Suzanne	Megan Pietkau
Mary Jo	Jill Hames
Haley	Kelly Criss
Caulder	Sean Bryan

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**Horizon Theatre Company** connects people, inspires hope, and promotes positive change through the stories of our times for our diverse audiences. Now in our 38th season, we produce professional area and world premieres of smart, funny, and provocative contemporary plays. We also develop the next generation of diverse artists and audiences for theatre.

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