

Mark Taper Forum

ANGELES MUSIC CENTER

CENTER THEATRE GROUP

▶ THIS BRIGHT WILDERNESS

CELEBRATING THE LEGACY OF BLACK THEATRE
AT THE MARK TAPER FORUM AND LOS ANGELES

Directed by **ANDI CHAPMAN**
Curated by **CLASSIX**



TAPER
LEGACY

R E A D I N G

JUN 15 2015 | MARK TAPER FORUM

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Welcome to the Mark Taper Forum.

The Mark Taper Forum is one of the pre-eminent stages in the American Theatre. It is home to *Zoot Suit*; *Angels in America*; *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992*; and *Children of a Lesser God*—to name but a few of the iconic works that have premiered on this stage.

This past year we launched CTG:FWD, a new initiative dedicated to special events, community gatherings, and legacy projects. As part of CTG: FWD, The Taper Legacy Readings honor our rich history with readings of impactful plays from the Taper vault. They are both an opportunity to revisit these works for our current audience and introduce them to the next generation. After kicking off this new series last month, we are thrilled to celebrate Juneteenth with a collection of excerpts, scenes, and songs from some of the iconic Black artists and playwrights whose work has appeared on the Taper stage. Tonight's program is titled *This Bright Wilderness*, named after a song from Suzan-Lori Parks' *Father Comes Home From the Wars (Part 1, 2 & 3)*, which had its West Coast Premiere at the Taper in 2016.

Thank you to tonight's director, Andi Chapman, as well as the CLASSIX team of Awoye, Brittany, AJ, Dominique, and Arminda who pulled this incredible evening together, and to the incredible cast and crew for bringing these plays to life for one night only.

In closing, thank you for your support of all the CTG:FWD programming we have produced at the Taper this year. We are thrilled to resume season programming at the Taper this fall with the world premiere of Larissa FastHorse's *Fake It Until You Make It*, a new Hitchcockian adaptation of *Hamlet* from the revolutionary writer/director Robert O'Hara, and *Green Day's American Idiot*, which is produced in collaboration with Deaf West Theatre. I look forward to seeing you in the fall.

Warm regards,



Snehal Desai
Artistic Director



Center Theatre Group
Presents

THIS BRIGHT WILDERNESS

Celebrating the Legacy of Black Theatre at the Mark Taper Forum and Los Angeles

With excerpts and songs from the plays

Jelly's Last Jam by Susan Birkenhead, Jelly Roll Morton, and George C. Wolfe

Additional Music by Luther Henderson

Don't Bother Me, I Can't Cope by Micki Grant

The Celebration by Bill Gunn

Father Comes Home from the Wars (Parts 1, 2 & 3) by Suzan-Lori Parks

Lackawanna Blues by Ruben Santiago-Hudson

House Arrest and *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992* by Anna Deavere Smith

Dream on Monkey Mountain by Derek Walcott

August Wilson's *Gem of the Ocean*

Neat by Charlayne Woodard

With

BRITTANY BRADFORD CURTISS COOK GREGG DANIEL KIMBERLY HÉBERT GREGORY LOVENSKY JEAN-BAPTISTE
NIJA OKORO GREG ALVEREZ REID RUBEN SANTIAGO-HUDSON MARCEL SPEARS SHA'LEAH NIKOLE STUBBLEFIELD

Legacy Reading Student Monologues

JOSEPH DARBY

NOEMI AVALOS VARGAS

Evening Host

NGOZI ANYANWU

Evening Presenters

JONELLE ALLEN

GREGG DANIEL

ARMINDA THOMAS

AWOYE TIMPO

Lighting Design
NATHAN SCHEUER

Sound Design
BRIAN HSIEH

Projection Design
NICK SANTIAGO

Music Direction
BYRON J. SMITH

Casting
KIM WILLIAMS

Associate Artistic Director
LINDSAY ALLBAUGH

Production Stage Manager
EDWARD KHRIS FERNANDEZ

Stage Manager
MIKAYLA BETTNER

Artistic Producer
AWOYE TIMPO

Curated by
CLASSIX

Directed By
ANDI CHAPMAN

JUNE 15, 2024 **MARK TAPER FORUM**

SCENES

“Lucia” from *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992*

by Anna Deavere Smith..... Noemi Avalos Vargas

“Homer” from *Father Comes Home From the Wars (Parts 1, 2 & 3)*

by Suzan-Lori Parks..... Joseph Darby

“Love Power” from *Don’t Bother Me, I Can’t Cope*

by Micki GrantBrittany Bradford, Curtiss Cook, Greg Alvarez Reid,
Sha’Leah Nikole Stubblefield, and Marcel Spears

Scene from *Dream on Monkey Mountain*

by Derek Walcott Gregg Daniel, Lovensky Jean-Baptiste

Scene from August Wilson’s

Gem of the Ocean..... Curtiss Cook, Kimberly Hébert Gregory

“Last Chance Blues” from *Jelly’s Last Jam*

by Susan Birkenhead, Jelly Roll Morton, and George C. Wolfe,
additional music by Luther Henderson Sha’Leah Nikole Stubblefield and Marcel Spears

Scene from *The Celebration*

by Bill Gunn Brittany Bradford, Marcel Spears

“A Whole Lot of Human Feeling” from *Don’t Bother Me I Can’t Cope*

by Micki Grant Sha’Leah Nikole Stubblefield

Scene from *Lackawanna Blues*

by Ruben Santiago-Hudson Ruben Santiago-Hudson

“Poison” from *Neat*

by Charlayne Woodard..... Nija Okoro

Scene from *House Arrest*

by Anna Deavere Smith..... Brittany Bradford, Curtiss Cook, Greg Alvarez Reid

ORCHESTRA

CONDUCTOR / KEYS: BYRON J. SMITH

BASS: RICHARD TAYLOR

DRUMS: JOSEPH MITCHELL

CONTRACTOR: ROBERT PAYNE

PANELISTS

Moderator Khanisha Foster

Panelist Speaker Ruben Santiago-Hudson

Panelist Speaker Jonelle Allen

Panelist Speaker Nija Okoro

Please turn off all electronic devices such as cellular phones and watch alarms. The use of any recording device, either audio or video, and the taking of photographs, with or without flash, is strictly prohibited.

A Note From The Director

By Andi Chapman

This event is a beautiful connection of ancestry and oral tradition. The Black storytelling tradition has always been guided by a passing down of stories. This is how the tapestry of a legacy is built. As these stories are passed on, so too is a splendid vision for the world as it should be. In her Nobel Prize lecture, the great author Toni Morrison said, “We die. That may be the meaning of life. But we do language. That may be the measure of our lives.”

I'm thrilled to be part of this event that elevates the extraordinary language of these plays and keeps our stories and the legacy of these phenomenal writers alive. It is through language that we preserve our culture, honor our ancestors, and inspire future generations. The power of words is immeasurable, for they have the ability to transport us to different worlds, evoke emotions, and ignite change.

The plays featured in this event are a testament to the resilience, creativity, and brilliance of Black writers. They capture the essence of our experiences, struggles, triumphs, and aspirations. Each play is a masterpiece, woven with intricate narratives, vibrant characters, and thought-provoking themes.

By showcasing these plays, we not only celebrate the artistry of Black storytelling but also challenge societal norms, amplify marginalized voices, and promote inclusivity. These plays open doors to conversations about race, identity, social justice, and the complexities of the human experience.

Through this event, we pay homage to the Black writers who have paved the way for us and continue to inspire us today. Their words have the power to shape minds, break barriers, and ignite social change. They remind us of the importance of storytelling as a means of resistance, healing, and empowerment.

I invite you all to immerse yourselves in the richness of these plays, to listen to the voices of the past, present, and future. Let us honor the legacy of these phenomenal writers and keep their stories alive, ensuring that their words, their songs resonate for generations to come. Together, let us continue the tradition of storytelling, for it is through our stories that we find connection, understanding, and the power to create a more equitable and compassionate world.

Classix Program Note

By Classix: Brittany Bradford, A.J. Muhammad, Dominique Rider, Arminda Thomas, Awoye Timpo

In 1983, the South African writer Mbongeni Ngema (best known for *Sarafina!*) wrote a new musical called *Asinamali!*. The story takes place in a prison. The five-character play in which the actors take on numerous roles is a celebration of the resistance movement to apartheid, inspired by a 1983 rent strike in which the strike leader was assassinated. The show premiered at Lincoln Center, moved to Broadway, and then opened at the Mark Taper Forum on July 29th, 1986. Its soaring music, political themes, and rigorous performances captured the imaginations of audiences in Los Angeles at the time.

Asinamali! is reflective of many of the other works by Black writers that have graced the stage of the Mark Taper Forum—it is stylistically adventurous, politically engaged, rigorously acted and directed, and genre-bending in its execution.

The Mark Taper Forum opened in 1967 and the first work by a Black author with a full production in the venue was the world premiere of *Dream on Monkey Mountain* by soon-to-be Nobel Prize winner Derek Walcott in 1970. The next work by a Black author was Micki Grant in 1972. Her luminous musical revue, *Don't Bother Me, I Can't Cope*, had premiered on Broadway and was nominated for four history-making Tony Awards.

Since then, the work of some of our great American playwrights has been developed on this stage, including numerous plays in August Wilson's epic American Century Cycle, and *Jelly's Last Jam* by George C. Wolfe, Susan Birkenhead, and Luther Henderson. Ntozake Shange's era-defining choreopoem *for colored girls who have considered suicide / when the rainbow is enuf* had its West Coast Premiere at the Taper and the legacy of those artists and plays lives on in more contemporary productions of plays and newly expansive writing by Suzan-Lori Parks, Lynn Nottage, and Branden Jacobs-Jenkins.

Of the 313 productions that have appeared at the Taper, 34 have been written by Black authors. And, like most major regional theatres, that representation has expanded and contracted depending on the season.

All around Los Angeles, Black artists have been developing new work, exploring new worlds and creating visceral, poetic, and dynamic stories for centuries, some of which may never choose to or be selected to have a work on the Taper stage. Ebony Rep, founded by Israel Hicks and Wren Brown, continues to explore both celebrated and uncharted territory in Black writing. Towne Street Theatre, founded by Nancy Cheryl Davis-Bellamy, Nancy Renée and Nathaniel Bellamy in 1993, has been devoted to cultivating new voices and producing "Black classics." The Robey Theater, founded by veteran actors Ben Guillory and Danny Glover, has been committed to preserving the Black theatrical canon since its founding in 1994. And there are numerous others. Organizations such as Support Black Theater have provided community and support for smaller theaters with ambitious goals and a plethora of talent. We hope everyone in this room will join their mailing lists and support their exciting work.

Tonight's event is both a celebration and an attempt to bridge a gap and create a dialogue between two realities.

The work of Classix is to explode the classical canon through an exploration of dramatic works by Black writers and also Black performance history. We are constantly looking for opportunities to ensure that the work of celebrated writers stays in focus and also delight in the chance to shine a light on lesser-known, brilliant artists who have forged new paths and written exhilarating plays over time, around the Diaspora. Tonight, that focus illuminates astonishing work right here in Los Angeles, where plays developed in this room have gone on to galvanize and inspire audiences across the nation. A city of light, indeed.

Thank you for joining us on this journey through the past and the creation of a new future of Black work at the Mark Taper Forum.

CAST



**BRITTANY
BRADFORD**



**CURTISS
COOK**



**GREGG
DANIEL**



**KIMBERLY
HÉBERT GREGORY**



**LOVENSKY
JEAN-BAPTISTE**



**NIJA
OKORO**



**GREG
ALVEREZ REID**



**RUBEN
SANTIAGO-HUDSON**



**MARCEL
SPEARS**



**SHA'LEAH NIKOLE
STUBBLEFIELD**

WHO'S WHO

BRITTANY BRADFORD (*Actor, she/her*). Broadway: *Bernhardt/Hamlet*. Off-Broadway: *The Comeuppance* (Obie Award, Signature), *Wedding Band* (Obie Award, TFANA), *Fefu and Her Friends* (TFANA), *Mac Beth* (Hunter theatre Project), *Merrily We Roll Along* (Roundabout/Fiasco Theater), TV: *Julia* (HBO Max), *The Watcher* (Netflix), *The Gilded Age* (HBO Max), *Dead Ringers* (Amazon), *Fire Country* (CBS), *Fear The Walking Dead* (AMC), *New Amsterdam* (NBC). Film: *The Same Storm* (dir. Peter Hedges). Classix member and HomeBase Theater Collective co-founder. Training: Juilliard.

CURTISS COOK (*Actor, he/him*), a Dayton, Ohio native, is a highly acclaimed actor with a diverse career spanning theatre, television, and film. He received formal training at the Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts in London, becoming the first American to earn a full-ride scholarship. His international experience shaped his craft, leading to notable performances on Broadway, including roles in *The Lion King* and *Miss Saigon*, showcasing his range and talent. Off-Broadway, Cook has delivered powerful performances in productions like *The Paper Man* and *Angel Levine*, earning praise for his depth and sensitivity. In television and film, he has starred in projects such as Showtime's *The Chi*, *West Side Story*, *Shutter Island*, and *The Interpreter* among others. Throughout his career, Cook has demonstrated a commitment to authenticity and passion, inspiring aspiring actors. With his legacy secured as a formidable presence in the theatre world, audiences can anticipate many more captivating performances from him in the future.

GREGG DANIEL (*Actor, Presenter; he/him*). Gregg T. Daniel is best known for his recurring roles as David Carter in HBO's *Insecure* and Reverend Daniels in HBO's *True Blood*. With over 100 film and television credits, his roles span comedy (*I Am Not Okay With This*), drama (*Insecure*), procedurals (*911*, *Grey's Anatomy*), science fiction (*Star Trek: Voyager*), and children's shows (*Austin & Ally*, *Kickin' It*). His big screen credits include *Spiderman 3*, *7th & Union*, and *Truth Or Dare*. Gregg recently starred in *7th And Union* and will appear in the upcoming sequel *Joker: Folie à Deux*. Gregg is also an accomplished theatre director. He is a founding member and Artistic Director of the Los Angeles-based Lower Depth Theatre Ensemble. He was nominated for a 2013 NAACP Image Award for directing *Elmina's Kitchen*, winning the NAACP Award for Best Ensemble. He has directed three August Wilson plays and notable productions such as Tom Stoppard's *Heroes*, Sybil Walker's *Beneath Rippling Waters*, and Frank McGuinness' *Someone Who'll Watch Over Me*. At Theatre 150 in Ojai, California, he directed August Wilson's *Seven Guitars*, Athol Fugard's *Sizwe Bansi*, Diana Son's *Stop Kiss*, and the Pulitzer Prize-winning *I Am My Own Wife*. Gregg recently directed August Wilson's *King Hedley II* at A Noise Within Theatre and will direct his fifth Wilson play soon.

KIMBERLY HÉBERT GREGORY (*Actor, she/her*) is a combination of undeniable humor, clarity, intelligence, and strength. You know her best from her roles in HBO's *Vice Principals*, ABC's *Kevin Probably Saves the World*, *Better Call Saul*, *Two and a Half Men*, and *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*. She has starred in shows at the Geffen Playhouse such as, *Black Super Hero Magic Mama*, *Barbecue*, and *By the Way, Meet Vera Stark*, earning Drama Desk and Lucille Lortel nominations, as well as a NAACP Award. She holds two degrees, a BA in Psychology from Mount Holyoke College and a Masters' in Social Service Administration from The University of Chicago. Kimberly is an advocate for families and special needs children, and a voice for mental health services in underserved communities. She is an actor, a thinker, an advocate, a mother, a daughter, a proud auntie, and a friend.

LOVENSKY JEAN-BAPTISTE (*Actor, he/him*) is thrilled to be making his return to The Mark Taper Forum. He last appeared here in the homecoming of *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992*. MFA alumni of UCLA School of Theater, Film, and Television, Lovensky is a dynamic character actor most known for Fox's *24*, Netflix's *Startup*, and for voicing Placide in *Cyberpunk 2077*. Additional television credits include recurring guest-star roles in NBC's *Young Rock*, MGM's *Mr. Mom*, TNT's *Animal Kingdom*, Paramount's *Mayor of Kingstown*, Netflix's *The Upshaws*. Film credits include a leading role in Amazon Prime's *Spiked* and Disney's *Vacation Friends 2*. His numerous stage appearances include the lead role in the US premiere tour of Athol Fugard's *Victory*, *Icebergs* at the Geffen Playhouse, and Fugard's *The Island* at The Lucy Florence African American Cultural Center.

NIJA OKORO (*Actor, Panelist; she/her*) is thrilled to be back on the Taper stage! She is from the Bronx, NY and based in LA. Recently Nija won the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award for Best Lead Performance for her work in *Blues for an Alabama Sky*, directed by Phylicia Rashad (Mark Taper Forum). Other theatrical credits include the National Broadway Tour of *Jitney* directed by Ruben Santiago-Hudson, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* (Mark Taper Forum), *The Legend of Georgia McBride* by Matthew López (Geffen Playhouse), the world premiere of *Zoey's Perfect Wedding* by Matthew López (Denver Center), *Two Trains Running* directed by Michele Shay (Matrix Theatre), *An Octoroon* (Chautauqua), *Bossa Nova* (Sundance Theatre Lab), and *The Mountaintop* (Cape May Stage). Nija has guest starred on *911 Lone Star*, *The Deuce*, *Animal Kingdom*, *Hail Mary*, *Southland*, and *ER*. Nija has recurred on *Insecure*, *Start Up*, and *Monday Mornings*. Recent film credits include *Hollywood Stargirl* with Uma Thurman and Judd Hirsch, *The Stay*, *Rebroken*, and *The Black Emperor of Broadway*. Nija has received, for her stage work, five LA Drama Circle Awards and an Ovation Award, among

many others. In her spare time Nija enjoys coaching actors for her company Play in your Light Studio. She is a graduate of the Juilliard School.

GREG ALVEREZ REID (*Actor, he/him*). Most recently starred in *Fat Ham* at Studio Theatre (2024) and *Sweat at Northern Stage* (2023). In 2022, he starred in *Blues for an Alabama Sky* at the Mark Taper Forum directed by Phylicia Rashad and *The Bluest Eye* at The Huntington Theatre directed by Awoye Timpo. Credits include Off-Broadway: *The Fabulous Miss Marie* (New Federal Theatre/Castillo Theatre); and Regional: *Detroit '67* (Signature Theatre), *Fences* (McCarter Theatre Center/Long Wharf Theatre), *All My Sons* (People's Light Theatre), *Brokeology* (Theater Alliance), *Gem of The Ocean* (Hangar Theatre), and *Seven Guitars* (Studio Theatre). On screen, he can be seen in the HBO film *Between The World And Me* and the television series *Wu-tang: An American Saga* (Hulu) and *FBI: Most Wanted* (CBS).

RUBEN SANTIAGO-HUDSON (*Actor, Playwright, Panelist; he/him*). Tony winner Ruben Santiago-Hudson directed the recent Broadway production *Jitney*, which garnered several awards, including the Tony Award for Outstanding Revival including and six Tony nominations. He won accolades for his adapted screenplay of August Wilson's *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, directed by George C. Wolfe, starring Viola Davis and Chadwick Boseman, and produced by Denzel Washington. Ruben's directing credits include *The Piano Lesson*, *Skeleton Crew*, *Othello*, *Gem of The Ocean*, *Paradise Blue*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, and more. Santiago-Hudson received a Tony Award as featured actor for his performance in August Wilson's *Seven Guitars* and made his Broadway acting debut in *Jelly's Last Jam*. He wrote, executive produced, and co-starred in the HBO film *Lackawanna Blues*, which received Emmy, Golden Globe, and NAACP Image Award honors. On film, Ruben starred in *American Gangster*, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, *Shaft*, *Devil's Advocate*, and *Domestic Disturbance*. On TV, he portrayed Dr. Percy Julian in *Forgotten Genius* and starred in *The Red Sneakers*. Other TV credits include *EAST NEW YORK*, *The Quad*, *Public Morals*, *Low Winter Sun*, *Billions*, *The West Wing*, *Law & Order*, and *Castle*. In 2014, Ruben opened The Ruben Santiago-Hudson Fine Arts Learning Center in his hometown of Lackawanna, NY, one of his most cherished accomplishments.

MARCEL SPEARS (*Actor, he/him*). Marcel Spears starred as "Juicy" in the Pulitzer Prize-winning play *Fat Ham* on Broadway, following an acclaimed run at The Public Theater. He most recently reprised the role at the Geffen Playhouse. On television, Spears co-stars in the CBS comedy *The Neighborhood* opposite Cedric the Entertainer, after co-starring in the ABC comedy *The Mayor*. Other theatre includes *Othello* (Classic Stage Company), *Ironbound* (Geffen Playhouse, West Coast

premiere), *At the Old Place* (La Jolla Playhouse), *Picasso at the Lapin Agile* (The Old Globe), *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* (Two River Theater, directed by Ruben Santiago-Hudson), *Judy* (Page 73), *Mother Courage and Her Children* (Classic Stage Company), *Trouble in Mind* (Guthrie Theater), and his NY stage debut in Classic Stage's Young Company production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* directed by Tyne Rafaeli, for which he was awarded the Rosemarie Tichler Fund Grant. Film: *Always a Bridesmaid*. Marcel is a New Orleans native and holds an MFA in Acting from Columbia University.

SHA'LEAH NIKOLE STUBBLEFIELD (*Actor, she/her*) is honored to be a part of This Bright Wilderness here at the Mark Taper Forum. This South Central native, has been deeply immersed in the arts since her adolescent years at Amazing Grace Conservatory. As a performer, she has made notable progress in the West Coast music and arts scene, earning recognition for her contributions to award-winning musical theater productions. Her recent theatre credits include *Gunshot Medley: Part 1, Witness Uganda* (The Wallis), *Love Actually Live* (The Wallis), and the NAACP Theatre Award-winning *Recorded In Hollywood* (The Kirk Douglas). Her talent has also afforded her the opportunity to share the stage and lend her vocal talents to prominent artists like Beyonce, Lizzo, Stevie Wonder, Elton John, Kanye West, D Smoke, and the late Nipsey Hussle. Sha'Leah was honored to portray young Mahalia in the film *Remember Me (The Mahalia Jackson Story)* now streaming on Hulu. As Sha'Leah pursues her artistry she is determined to leave a positive impact on the industry and committed to creating content that inspires. Find her original music on all Digital streaming platforms. @ShaLeahNikole

NGOZI ANYANWU (*Host*) is a multi-hyphenated storyteller most recently seen performing in Nathan Alan Davis's *The Refuge Plays* at The Roundabout Theatre with New York Theatre workshop. Anyanwu will have a world premiere of her play *Leroy and Lucy* this fall at Steppenwolf. She's a 2020 Steinberg Playwright Award winner. Her most recent play *Last Of The Love Letters* premiered at the Atlantic Theater Company Fall 2021. Previous productions include *Good Grief* (Vineyard Theatre in NYC / Center Theatre Group in LA) and *The Homecoming Queen* (sold-out world premiere run at the Atlantic Theatre). *Good Grief* was on the Kilroys List 2016 and a semifinalist for the Princess Grace Award and won the Humanitas Award. *The Homecoming Queen* was on the Kilroys List 2017 and was a Leah Ryan Finalist. Her play *Nike...* (Kilroys List 2017) was workshopped at The New Black Fest in conjunction with The Lark and The Strand Festival in conjunction with A.C.T and Space on Ryder Farm. Ngozi also has commissions with NYU, The Old Globe, Two Rivers Theatre, The Atlantic Theatre, and Steppenwolf. Anyanwu has also received residencies from LCT3, Space on Ryder Farm, the

Djerassi Resident Artists Program, The New Harmony Project, New York Stage and Film and Page 73. She attended Point Park University (BA) and received her MFA in Acting from University of California, San Diego. Upcoming: *Leroy & Lucy* at Steppenwolf.

ANDI CHAPMAN (*Director*). Born in New York City, Ms. Chapman is a director, actor, educator. She is the Associate Artistic Director of The Ebony Repertory Theatre. Her Directing credits include: Theatre: *SHE* World Premiere at the Anteaus Theatre; Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* at A Noise Within Theatre; *BOTH AND* World Premiere at The Boston Court Theatre & Currently playing at the Wallis Theatre; The critically acclaimed *Native Son* Anteaus and Kirk Douglas Theatre, Garnering Best Director nominations (Stage Raw & BroadwayWorld); Ebony Repertory Theatre's *The Gospel at Colonus* which Garnered 14 Ovation Nominations. Including Best Play & Best Play Direction and won NAACP Theatre Awards 2016 Best Production. Others include *The Abuelas*, *Winters Tale*, *Mockingbird*, *As it is in Heaven*, *The Ninth Wave*, The Actor's Co-op Steel Magnolias, for which she garnered a Best Director Award, *The Dutchman*, *A Summer Memory*, and a host of others. Film: The award-winning short films *Memorial Street*, *Elijah's Song*, and *Why?*. As an actress, her television, film, stage credits include: recurring on shows like *911* and *The Orville* HTGAWM, *Criminal Minds*, *NCIS*, *SMLF*, *Shameless*, *Glee*, *Dexter*, *24*, *Six Feet Under*, *Short Cuts*. *The Lower Depths*, *Blood Wedding*. An Adjunct Professor of various universities (Pepperdine, Chapman) she is currently teaching Theatre/Film Acting at Azusa Pacific University. Ms. Chapman is a graduate of the New York High School for the Performing Arts. BFA/ The City College of New York's Davis Center for the Performing Arts. MFA/ The Yale School of Drama. An alumna of The American Film Institute's Directing Workshop for Women. Andi is also a selected participant of the prestigious Lincoln Center Directors Lab.

CLASSIX (*Curator*) a collective comprised of Brittany Bradford, A.J. Muhammad, Dominique Rider, Arminda Thomas, and Awoye Timpo, was created to explode the classical canon through an exploration of Black performance history and dramatic works by Black writers. These classics are defined as plays by authors of African descent from around the world that speak profoundly to the times in which they were written and resonate deeply with our own. Classix engages artists, historians, students, professors, producers and audiences to launch these plays into the public imagination and spark productions worldwide. In 2017 Classix began as a series of staged readings in collaboration with the Martin E. Segal Center. In 2019, Classix worked with Theatre for a New Audience (TFANA) to produce an ongoing series of readings. The first play in this series, Alice Childress's *Wedding Band*

went on to have critically-acclaimed production in 2022 at TFANA, bringing the work back to New York for the first time since 1972. Classix engages the larger narrative of plays and creators through conversations with historians and theatre makers on its podcast series, social media platforms, and in live events; educational outreach; new writings and analysis; and an archive of information on its website. theclassix.org

JONELLE ALLEN (*Presenter, she/her*). Beginning her professional career in the late 1960s, Allen has co-starred in films, Broadway productions, and television. In 1972, Allen was nominated for a Tony Award for Best Actress in a Musical for her performance in the musical *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. She was in the cast of the original off-Broadway 1968 production of *Hair* at Joseph Papp's Public Theater, and also appeared in *George M!* before receiving critical acclaim and a Tony Award nomination for *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, which earned her New York Drama Critics' Circle, Drama Desk, Theatre World, and Outer Critics Circle Awards for her performance. Despite her success, it proved to be her last Broadway appearance to date. Her most notable roles are Grace, the entrepreneurial café owner in the Old West, whom she played for seven years on *Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman*, as well as the flamboyant and outspoken Doreen Jackson on the NBC soap opera *Generations*, and Lucinda Cavender, the vampire witch in the horror comedy film *The Midnight Hour*. Before *Generations*, she played ambitious salesgirl-turned-boutique-manager Stacey Russell on the short-lived prime-time soap *Berrenger's*. Allen appeared as legendary Harlem jazz queen Florence Mills in Harlem Renaissance at the 2007 Edinburgh Festival Fringe. She is an adjunct professor teaching at Saddleback College, UCI, and a member of Vinette Carrolls URBAN ARTS CORP.

SUSAN BIRKENHEAD (*Playwright*) received a Tony Nomination, a Grammy nominations, and a Drama Desk Award for her lyrics for *Jelly's Last Jam*, which she wrote with George C. Wolfe and which premiered at the Mark Taper Forum in 1991. It was revived at Encores in New York four months ago and is moving to Broadway in the 2025-2026 season. She was nominated for a Tony award for *Working*, and a Drama Desk Award for *Triumph of Love*. She won an Outer Critics Circle Award for *What About Luv?* and a Los Angeles Drama Critics Award for *Minsky's*. She wrote additional lyrics for *High Society* on Broadway, and was one of several writers of *A My Name Is Alice* and *Stars of David* Off-Broadway. *The Secret Life of Bees*, which she's written with Lynn Nottage and Duncan Sheik, just finished a run in London and will open in New York in 2025. *Boop*, which she's written with David Foster and Bob Martin, directed and choreographed by Jerry Mitchell, will go into rehearsals in January and will open on Broadway in April of 2025.

MICKI GRANT, PHD (*Composer, Lyricist, Playwright; she/her*). Micki Grant was a pioneering force in American musical theatre, renowned for her trailblazing contributions as a composer, lyricist, and playwright. Born in Chicago, Grant's career spanned over six decades, during which she captivated audiences with her innovative compositions and socially conscious themes. She made history as the first woman to write both the music and lyrics for a Broadway musical with the Grammy-winning, Tony-nominated *Don't Bother Me, I Can't Cope* (1972). Grant's unwavering passion and commitment to humanity and using her art as a platform for social change, has left an indelible mark on the world of entertainment. Her legacy continues to inspire and resonate with audiences worldwide, embodying the transformative power of creativity and activism.

BILL GUNN (*Playwright*) began his career in the 1950s as a stage actor, making his Broadway debut in *The Immoralist* (1954) with James Dean. He wrote his first play, *Marcus in the High Grass*, in 1959. He entered the film and television world as an actor in the 1960s with roles on many series including *The Fugitive* (1965) and *Outer Limits* (1963). A prolific screenwriter, he was commissioned to write *The Landlord* (1970), adapted from the novel by Kristen Hunter and directed by Hal Ashby, and *The Angel Levine* (1970), adapted from a story by Bernard Malamud and directed by Ján Kadár. His many unproduced screenwriting credits include: *Fame Game* (1968) and *Don't the Moon Look Lonesome* (1970). One of the first Black filmmakers to direct a film for a major Hollywood studio, Gunn made *Stop!* in 1970, which remains to this day unreleased by Warner Bros. He went on to direct the masterpiece *Ganja & Hess* (1973) and the conceived for television series *Personal Problems* (1980) in collaboration with Ishmael Reed and Steve Cannon. His most notable screen role as an actor was in Kathleen Collins' *Losing Ground* (1982). His teleplay *Johnnas*, produced for NBC, received an Emmy Award in 1972. Gunn's theatrical productions include his plays *Celebration* (1967), *Black Picture Show* (1975), and the musical *Rhinestone* (1982). Bill Gunn died in 1989 at the age of 59, the day before the premiere of his final play *The Forbidden City* at the Public Theater.

JELLY ROLL MORTON (*Playwright*) was an American jazz composer and pianist who pioneered the use of prearranged, semiorchestrated effects in jazz-band performances. Morton learned the piano as a child and from 1902 was a professional pianist in the bordellos of the Storyville district of New Orleans. He was one of the pioneer ragtime piano players, but he would later invite scorn by claiming to have "invented jazz in 1902." He was, nevertheless, an important innovator in the transition from early jazz to orchestral jazz that took place in New Orleans about the turn of the century. About 1917 he moved west to California, where he played in nightclubs until

1922. He made his recording debut in 1923, and from 1926 to 1930 he made, with a group called Morton's Red Hot Peppers, a series of recordings that gained him a national reputation. Morton's music was more formal than the early Dixieland jazz, though his arrangements only sketched parts and allowed for improvisation. As a jazz composer, Morton is best remembered for such pieces as *Black Bottom Stomp*, *King Porter Stomp*, *Shoe Shiner's Drag*, and *Dead Man Blues*.

SUZAN-LORI PARKS (*Playwright*) is a multi-award-winning American writer/musician and the first African American woman to receive the Pulitzer Prize for Drama for *Topdog/Underdog* which recently enjoyed its twentieth anniversary Broadway revival. The production won both the 2023 Tony Award, (Best Revival Of A Play) and the Outer Critics Circle Award. Just last year, in 2023, Parks also had three new works which all received world premieres: at the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis, *Sally & Tom* (Steinberg New Play Award finalist) at Joe's Pub in New York City, *Plays for the Plague Year* (winner of The Drama Desk Award for Best Music in a Play), and, at the Public Theater, Parks world-premiered a musical adaptation of the 1972 film *The Harder They Come* (winner: Outer Critics Circle Award for Outstanding New Off-Broadway Musical.) Parks' other notable works for theatre include: *The Gershwins' Porgy and Bess* (Tony Award for Best Revival of a Musical), *Unchain My Heart: The Ray Charles Musical*, *White Noise*, *The Book of Grace*, *In the Blood*, *The Death of the Last Black Man in the Whole Entire World*, *The America Play*, *Father Comes Home From The Wars (Parts 1,2,&3)* and *Fucking A*. Parks' marathon writing "diary play" *365 Days/365 Plays*—her first project in which she wrote a play a day for an entire year—was produced at more than seven hundred theaters worldwide, creating one of the largest grassroots collaborations in theater history. A MacArthur "Genius" Fellow, Parks' novel *Getting Mother's Body* is published by Random House. She also writes extensively for the screen—most recently, as the scriptwriter for the film *The United States vs. Billie Holiday* and as the showrunner/executive producer/head writer for the television show *Genius: Aretha*. In 2023 Parks was named among *TIME* Magazine's 100. Other notable accolades and awards include the prestigious Gish Prize for Excellence in the Arts, grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the New York Foundation for the Arts. She is also a recipient of a Lila-Wallace—*Reader's Digest* Award, a CalArts/Herb Alpert Award in the Arts, and a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship. In November 2022, Parks was inducted into the Theater Hall of Fame. She is Writer in Residence of the Public Theater, a professor at New York University, and an alumna of New Dramatists and of Mount Holyoke College where she studied creative writing with James Baldwin, who encouraged Parks to begin writing

for the theatre. In her spare time, Parks also writes songs and fronts her band Sula and The Joyful Noise.

ANNA DEAVERE SMITH (*Playwright*) is a playwright and actress. She's credited with having created a new form of theatre. President Obama awarded Smith the National Endowment for the Humanities Medal. She's the recipient of the MacArthur Fellowship, several Obie awards, a Drama Desk award, and the George Polk Career Award in Journalism and the Dean's Medal from Stanford University School of Medicine. She was a runner-up for the Pulitzer Prize and nominated for two Tony Awards. Her plays focus on contemporary issues from multiple points of view. They are composed of excerpts of hundreds of interviews. Plays and films based on them include *Fires in the Mirror*; *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992*; *Let Me Down Easy*, and *Notes from the Field*. Her work as an actress on television includes: *Inventing Anna*, *The West Wing*, *Nurse Jackie*, and *Black-ish*. Mainstream movies include *Philadelphia*, *The American President*, and *Rachel Getting Married*. She's a professor at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. She has several honorary doctorate degrees including those from Harvard, Yale, Dartmouth, Spelman College, Juilliard, and Oxford.

DEREK WALCOTT (*Playwright*). A professor, poet, and playwright of English, Dutch, and African descent, Derek Walcott was a 1981 MacArthur Foundation "Genius" grant recipient who received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1992. Born on January 23, 1930 to Warwick, a civil servant, and Alix Maarlin Walcott, an elementary school teacher, Derek Alton Walcott, his twin brother Roderick, and sister Pamela were raised in Castries, Saint Lucia, in the West Indies by their mother. He received a scholarship to study at the University College of the West Indies in Mona, Jamaica, where he majored in French, Latin, and Spanish. At college, he began writing plays. His first, about the revolutionary Haitian leader Henri Christophe, was produced in St. Lucia in 1950. He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in 1953. During his expansive career, Walcott shifted between poetry, playwriting, and directing. His most well-known play is *Dream on Monkey Mountain*, which debuted off-Broadway in 1971 and for which he won an Obie Award.

AUGUST WILSON (*Playwright*) (April 27, 1945 – October 2, 2005) authored *Gem of the Ocean*, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *The Piano Lesson*, *Seven Guitars*, *Fences*, *Two Trains Running*, *Jitney*, *King Hedley II*, and *Radio Golf*. These works explore the heritage and experience of African Americans, decade-by-decade, over the course of the twentieth century. His plays have been produced at regional theaters across the country and all over the world, as well as on Broadway. In 2003, Mr. Wilson made his professional stage debut in his one-man show, *How I Learned What I Learned*.

Mr. Wilson's works garnered many awards including Pulitzer Prizes for *Fences* (1987); and for *The Piano Lesson* (1990); a Tony Award for *Fences*; Great Britain's Olivier Award for *Jitney*; as well as eight New York Drama Critics Circle Awards for *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *Fences*, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *The Piano Lesson*, *Two Trains Running*, *Seven Guitars*, *Jitney*, and *Radio Golf*. Additionally, the cast recording of *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* received a 1985 Grammy Award, and Mr. Wilson received a 1995 Emmy Award nomination for his screenplay adaptation of *The Piano Lesson*. Mr. Wilson's early works included the one-act plays *The Janitor*, *Recycle*, *The Coldest Day of the Year*, *Malcolm X*, *The Homecoming* and the musical satire *Black Bart and the Sacred Hills*. Mr. Wilson received many fellowships and awards, including Rockefeller and Guggenheim Fellowships in Playwriting, the Whiting Writers Award, 2003 Heinz Award, was awarded a 1999 National Humanities Medal by the President of the United States, and received numerous honorary degrees from colleges and universities, as well as the only high school diploma ever issued by the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh. He was an alumnus of New Dramatists, a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, a 1995 inductee into the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and on October 16, 2005, Broadway renamed the theater located at 245 West 52nd Street - The August Wilson Theatre. Additionally, Mr. Wilson was posthumously inducted into the Theater Hall of Fame in 2007. Mr. Wilson was born and raised in the Hill District of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and lived in Seattle, Washington at the time of his death. He is immediately survived by his two daughters, Sakina Ansari and Azula Carmen Wilson, and his wife, costume designer Constanza Romero.

GEORGE C. WOLFE (*Playwright*) is a writer, director, producer of theatre and film. Theatre directing credits include *The Iceman Cometh*; *Shuffle Along, or the Making of the Musical Sensation of 1921 and All That Followed* (NY Drama Critics' Circle Award and Drama Desk Award for Best Musical); *Lucky Guy*; *The Normal Heart* (Drama Desk); *Jelly's Last Jam* (Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle Award); *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches* (Tony Award and Drama Desk) and *Perestroika* (Drama Desk); *Bring in 'da Noise, Bring in 'da Funk* (Tony and Drama League Award); *Topdog/Underdog* (Obie Award); *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992* (Drama Desk); *Elaine Stritch at Liberty* (Tony for Special Theatrical Event); *The Tempest*; *Caroline, or Change* (Olivier Award Best Musical); and *A Free Man of Color*. From 1993-2005 Wolfe was the Producer of The Public Theater/New York Shakespeare Festival. He is the writer of the award-winning *The Colored Museum*, *Shuffle Along...*, he directed/adapted *Spunk* (Obie Award), and *Harlem Song*.

CHARLAYNE WOODARD (*Playwright*) is a two-time Obie Award winner and Tony Award nominee. Plays include *Pretty Fire* (LA Drama Critics and NAACP awards) *Neat* (Irving and Blanche Laurie Theatre Vision Award, *Outer Critics Circle* nomination) *In Real Life* (Audelco, Backstage West Garland and NAACP awards, Drama Desk and *Outer Critics Circle* nominations), *The Night Watcher* (LA Drama Critics and NAACP awards) and *Flight*. As an actor, acting credits include *Ain't Misbehavin'* (Tony and Drama Desk nominations). Off-Broadway credits include "Daddy" (Lucille Lortel nomination), *Hamlet; War, The Substance of Fire, The Witch of Edmonton* (Obie Award), *In The Blood* (Obie Award), *Fabulation . . .*, *Stunning, Sorrows and Rejoicings* (Audelco award), *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*. Regional credits include *A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Taming of the Shrew, The Good Person of Szechuan*, and *Pretty Fire*.

KIM WILLIAMS (*Casting Director, she/her*). Producer | Casting Director Kim Williams most recently served as Vice President of Casting, Disney Television Studios where she left an indelible mark as Casting Director for the acclaimed series *Genius: MLK/X*. Kim also cast Lee Daniels' Hulu series *Sammy Davis Jr.*, Disney+'s *The Crossover*, and oversaw casting for FX's *The Old Man*, Showtime's *The Chi*, and USA's *Queen of the South*. Kim's experience spans from ABC, Paramount Pictures, Fox, as well as a decade at HBO. She oversaw casting for projects including *For Life, Mixed-ish*, and *Single Parents, Annihilation, Jack Reacher: Never Look Back, Glee*, and *Everybody Loves Raymond*. As an independent casting director, Kim's credits include *Martin, Girlfriends, All American, Narcos, The Bernie Mac Show*, and several Tyler Perry projects including *Diary of a Mad Black Woman, Daddy's Little Girls, Why Did Get Married* and *Why Did I Get Married Too*. Kim also worked with The HBO Access project, shepherding new filmmakers and identifying new and upcoming actors. Kim previously served as President of the Casting Society of America and is currently on boards for the David Geffen School of Drama at Yale and New Filmmakers Los Angeles, as well as the Host Committee for Tarell Alvin McCraney at the Geffen Playhouse.

BRIAN HSIEH (*Sound Design, he/him*). Broadway: (Assoc. Sound Design) *OJAOMT, JLP, FNL, SM-TOTD*, (Programmer.) *CATCF*, (Asst. Sound Design), *YF, PQ, LST*. Nat. Tours: (Assoc. Sound Design): *JLP, CATCF, FNL, YF, LCAF*. Sound Mixer: *B!, MM!* Regional: (Sound Design) *ACS, LAL, B, HORH, SoM, ATL, NA, SA, JTW*. One of these days, Brian also hopes to figure out what all the acronyms stand for.

NICHOLAS SANTIAGO (*Projection Designer, he/him*) has worked for numerous universities and theatre companies around Los Angeles including the Pasadena Playhouse (*Ham*), Skylight Theatre (*Church & State, Obama Ology*), Rogue Machine (*A Permanent Image*), USC (*Trojan Women, On the*

Town), The Chance Theatre (*Big Fish, American Idiot*), Azusa Pacific University (*Murder on the Orient Express, Curious Incident*), LA LGBT Center (*The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life Revisited, Menstruation*), and the Fountain Theatre (*Arrival & Departure, The Cost of Living*). He has received numerous awards including a LA Drama Critic's Circle award for his work on Rogue Machine's *A Permanent image*, an Ovation Award win for his work on The Fountain Theatre's production of *The Cost of Living*, and an OCTG and Stage Raw Award for his production of *American Idiot* at The Chance Theatre. nsantiagodesign.com

NATHAN W. SCHEUER (*Projection Designer, he/him*) is a lighting and projection designer based in Los Angeles. Select lighting credits include national tours of *Dancing with the Stars Live* (2023, 2024), *Cheer Live!* (2023), *A Charlie Brown Christmas Live!* as well as *Count of Monte Cristo* (Tuacahn), *Rent, The Addams Family* (Broadway Sacramento), *Memoryhouse* (Los Angeles Ballet), *Kinky Boots, Singing in the Rain, Jesus Christ Superstar, Les Misérables* (The Muny), *The Wolves* (Syracuse Stage), *A Taste of Things to Come* (Broadway in Chicago), *Within Without, Pretty Peculiar Things, E/Space, Carry Me Anew* (Barak Ballet), *Heisenberg, Admissions* (RepSTL), *Dreamgirls, Come Blow Your Horn, Sister Act* (New Theatre), *After the Curtain* (Shaping Sound). Nathan has also had the pleasure to design for artists like Mandy Patinkin, Patti Lupone, Selena Gomez, Barry Manilow, Alice Cooper as well working with the New York City Ballet, Paris Opera Ballet, Lincoln Center, San Francisco Opera. Proud member of USA-829.

BYRON J. SMITH (*Music Director*) is a native of Los Angeles, California, has had a long career as a music director, studio musician, arranger and producer; working with countless a-list artist ranging from Akon to Barbra Streisand. He receives rave reviews for his music direction of both theatrical and live productions. Byron is the winner of the NAACP Theater Image Award for best original score and best music direction of his musical, *Children of the Night*. Mr. Smith's choral works have sold thousands of copies throughout the country and the world. His business ventures include Pro Pianist Entertainment; a music production service and Onyx Music Publishing which celebrates distributing his outstanding choral music. His professional vocal ensemble, "The Spirit Chorale of Los Angeles," has uplifted audiences for more than 30 years. This 18-member ensemble of some of Los Angeles' sought-after solo vocal artist combines to an inspirational and entertaining choral experience. Professor Smith celebrates his recent debut of his gospel and spiritual compositions at Carnegie Hall's Stern Auditorium performed by members of his various choirs and the New England Symphonic Ensemble. Byron is President Emeritus of The National Association of Negro Musicians, Inc., a historic organization since 1919.

EDWARD KHRIS FERNANDEZ (*Production Stage Manager, he/him*). Filipino-American AEA Stage Manager. Regional: Center Theatre Group; Ahmanson Theatre; Mark Taper Forum, Alley Theatre, Geffen Playhouse, Goodman Theatre, Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, La Jolla Playhouse, Alley Theatre, East West Players, ANoiseWithin, Diversionary Theatre, Coronado Playhouse. Opera/Dance: San Diego Opera, Pasadena Dance Theatre. More at ekfsm.com

MIKAYLA BETTNER (*Assistant Stage Manager, she/her*). *Ghost Waltz* (Latino Theatre Company); *Love Actually Live* (The Wallis); *The Engagement Party* (Geffen Playhouse); *Stew, Sunday in the Park with George* (Pasadena Playhouse); *On This Side of the World* (East West Players); *Sweeney Todd, A Christmas Carol, Animal Farm, Metamorphoses* (A Noise Within).

ARMINDA THOMAS (*Dramaturg, she/her*) is a dramaturg, director, and archivist. She currently serves as resident dramaturg and producing member of CLASSIX, and as a curator for New Perspectives Theatre's *On Her Shoulders* reading series, where she has led explorations into the works of Marita Bonner, Eulalie Spence, Georgia Douglass Johnson, and Alice Childress. Selected dramaturgy credits include *The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window* (Jones Theatre/Brooklyn Academy of Music), *Death of a Salesman* (Hudson Theatre), *Renaissance Mix Tape* (Apollo Victoria), *Trouble in Mind* (Hartford Stage), *Wedding Band* (Theatre for a New Audience), *Black Picture Show* (Artists Space), *Mirrors* (Next Door at New York Theatre Workshop), *Black History Museum... According to the United States of America* (HERE Arts Center), *Jazz* (Baltimore Center Stage), and *June and Jean in Concert* (Signature). She previously served as archivist and dramaturg for Dee-Davis Enterprises, where she was an executive producer for the Grammy-awarded audiobook, *With Ossie and Ruby: In This Life Together*, and consultant for the film *Life's Essentials with Ruby Dee*.

CENTER THEATRE GROUP

SNEHAL DESAI (*Artistic Director, he/him*) was appointed Center Theatre Group's third artistic director in 2023. As an artistic leader, Snehal has sought to raise awareness on social issues that affect Angelenos through impactful and empowering storytelling. Previously, he was the Producing Artistic Director of East West Players. A Soros Fellow and the recipient of a Tanne Award, Snehal was the Inaugural Recipient of the Drama League's Classical Directing Fellowship. He has served on the boards of the Consortium of Asian American Theaters and Artists (Caata), Theatre Communications Group (TCG), and currently serves on the board of the National Alliance for Musical Theatre (NAMT). Snehal was on the faculty of USC's graduate program in Arts Leadership and is a graduate of the Yale School of Drama.

MEGHAN PRESSMAN (*Managing Director/CEO, she/her*) joined Center Theatre Group in 2019. Previously, she served as Managing Director of Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company (D.C.), Director of Development for Signature Theatre (N.Y.), and Associate Managing Director of Berkeley Rep. She is a graduate of Yale School of Drama/Yale School of Management and serves as a mentor in the Theater Management program. Meghan has served as the Vice-Chair for the Theatre Communications Group Board of Directors and is a member of the Broadway League.

GORDON DAVIDSON (*Founding Artistic Director*) led the Taper throughout its first 38 seasons, guiding over 300 productions to its stage and winning countless awards for himself and the theatre—including the Tony Award for theatrical excellence, Margo Jones Award, The Governor's Award for the Arts, and a Guggenheim fellowship. *The Kentucky Cycle* and *Angels in America (Part One)* won the Pulitzer in consecutive years and, in 1994, three of the four plays nominated for the Tony Award for Best Play were from the Taper (*Angels in America* won). In 1989, Gordon took over the Ahmanson and, in 2004, he produced the inaugural season in the Kirk Douglas Theatre.

NAUSICA STERGIU (*General Manager*) has worked supporting artists in theatres of all shapes, sizes, and locales including Center Theatre Group as General Manager and, previously, as Audience Development Director. She oversees productions at the Taper and Douglas, as well as new play commissions and developmental productions. Nausica has taught Marketing and Management at USC's School of Dramatic Arts and works with local nonprofits including Hollywood Orchard. BA, Cornell University. MFA, Yale School of Drama.

DOUGLAS C. BAKER (*Producing Director, he/him*) joined Center Theatre Group in 1990. Doug is an active member of the Broadway League, the Independent Presenters Network (IPN), and is a proud member of the Association of Theatrical Press Agents and Managers (ATPAM). In 2013, Doug received the Broadway League's prestigious Outstanding Achievement in Presenter Management Award.

LINDSAY ALLBAUGH (*Associate Artistic Director, she/her*) is a member of Center Theatre Group's artistic staff and has served in varying capacities for the past 15 years. Selected producing credits include—Mark Taper Forum: *Archduke, Bent, What the Butler Saw, Steward of Christendom, Waiting for Godot*; Kirk Douglas Theatre: *Block Party, Big Night, Good Grief, Viciña, Throw Me on the Burnpile and Light Me Up, Endgame, Women Laughing Alone With Salad, Chavez Ravine, Race, different words for the same thing, The Nether*. Co-Artistic Director of the Elephant Theatre 2004–2014.

KHANISHA FOSTER (*Director of Equity, Belonging & Engagement, she/her*). Khanisha Foster's writing includes developing a TV series with K&L Productions (Kay Cannon & Laverne McKinnon) and adapting a Philip K. Dick novel with Electric Shepherd Productions and Julie Hébert. She recently directed *Raisin in the Sun* (SCR) and *A New Brain* (Celebration Theatre & The LGBT Center) khanishafoster.com

CENTER THEATRE GROUP, one of the nation's preeminent arts and cultural organizations, is Los Angeles' leading not-for-profit theatre company, which, under the leadership of Artistic Director Snehal Desai, Managing Director / CEO Meghan Pressman, and Producing Director Douglas C. Baker, programs seasons at the Mark Taper Forum and Ahmanson Theatre at The Music Center in Downtown Los Angeles, and the Kirk Douglas Theatre in Culver City. Center Theatre Group has produced more than 700 productions across its three stages. CenterTheatreGroup.org

ADDITIONAL STAFF

Casting Assistant.....Zoe James
Production AssistantBene't Benton

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Video of Micki Grant from the Legacy Project interview series, presented by the Dramatists Guild Foundation.



The Actors and Stage Managers employed in this production are members of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers of the United States.



The Director and Choreographer are members of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers, Inc., an independent national labor union.



The following employees are represented by the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, Moving Picture Machine Operators, Artists and Allied Crafts of the United States, its Territories and Canada, AFL-CIO, CLC: Stage Crew Local 33; Treasurers and Ticket Sellers Local 857; Wardrobe Crew Local 768; Make-up Artists and Hair Stylists Local 706.



United Scenic Artists represents designers and scenic artists for the American Theatre.

Center Theatre Group is a member of the League of Resident Theatres (LORT), the American Arts Alliance, the Broadway League, Independent Producers' Network (IPN), and the Theatre Communications Group (TCG).

SPECIAL THANKS

Wren T. Brown, Abdul Hamid, Daryl Walker,
Jennifer Armas, Daryl Waters

LEGACY READING STUDENT MONOLOGUES

The Monologue Project was created as a way to deepen the relationship between Center Theatre Group (CTG) and Education and Community Partnerships' official higher education partner, East Los Angeles College's (ELAC) Theater Department and expand opportunities for students with CTG artistic programs. Five ELAC students have been selected to present a monologue from past Mark Taper Forum productions at Center Theatre Group's The Gala: 2024 and Taper Legacy readings. These students were coached by ELAC Theatre faculty members.



NOEMI AVALOS VARGAS (*Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992*; she/her). Noemi started her acting journey at Schurr High school in 2016 and has since expanded her training at East Los Angeles College in 2021. Ever since then she has been in productions such as *Electricity*, *The Country Wife*, and most recently *A Christmas Carol*.



JOSEPH DARBY (*Father Comes Home From The Wars (Parts 1,2.&3)*; he/him). Joseph Darby is a Black/Mexican American actor from Pico Rivera who studied at East Los Angeles College and has been involved with a number of projects at Center Theatre Group. Credits include *Macbeth*, *Trouble The Water*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (Theatricum Botanicum), *Saint Joan*, and *Through the Looking Glass* (CTG).

Did you know that Center Theatre Group is a not-for-profit organization with a commitment to learning & engagement? Our Education and Community Partnerships programs create a place where artists, audiences, community members, students, and educators connect through the power of storytelling. Our programs support artists at all points in their careers, engage audiences before and after the show, encourage our community to make theatre a part of their everyday lives, and inspire the next generation of theatregoers, artists, and artisans. To learn more, visit CTGLA.org/programs.



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NOT A MOMENT BUT A MOVEMENT FESTIVAL

SAT
JUN
22

KIA WAS HERE

By Tahirih Moeller
Directed by Bruce Lemon

**FKA I AM A BAD
BLK PERSON**

By Z & Co" f/aka AzizA Barnes
Directed by nichI douglas

**LETTERS
FROM LORETTA**

By Cynthia Grace Robinson
Directed by Andi Chapman

**NIGHT
CITIES**

By Roger Q. Mason
Directed by Nancy Keystone

SUN
JUN
23

MON
JUN
24

BLUE PARIS BLUES

By t.tara turk-haynes
Directed by Khanisha Foster

JUN22-24 | KIRKDOUGLASTHEATRE.ORG

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*On staff for 10+ years.
°Education & Community Partnerships Alumni.

SNEHAL DESAI Artistic Director | **MEGHAN PRESSMAN** Managing Director/CEO | **DOUGLAS C. BAKER** Producing Director

GORDON DAVIDSON Founding Artistic Director

Center Theatre Group would like to thank its exceptional staff for their ongoing commitment, dedication, and extraordinary efforts.

ARTISTIC

LINDSAY ALLBAUGH* Associate Artistic Director
TIFFANY SLAGLE° Artistic & Literary Administrative Assistant
RANDOLPH MEREDYTH-DRAKE Executive Assistant to the Artistic Director

CASEY NICHOLAW, PHYLICIA RASHAD, PAULA VOGEL Associate Artists

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CAMILLE SCHEENKAN* Deputy Managing Director
KHANISHA FOSTER Director of Equity, Belonging & Engagement

A'RAELLE FLYNN-BOLDEN Staff Programs Manager
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NAIMA OROZCO-VALDIVIA Executive Office Fellow

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ERIC SIMS* Ahmanson Theatre Presentations Manager
KATIE SOFF* Associate General Manager
JEFFREY UPAH* General Management Associate
KIARA BRYANT Company Manager
TAYLOR CULLEN Temporary Assistant Company Manager

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AURORA ILOG Creative Workforce Initiatives Director
MEIGHAN LA ROCCA Program Manager
COURTNEY CLARK° Digital Learning Manager
NATALIA QUINTERO-RIESTRA Education & Community Partnerships Coordinator
NEVAEH GUTIERREZ Education Data Analysis Intern
ESTELA GARCIA, CHRISTINE BREIHAN Resident Teaching Artists
ZACHARY BONES, RAMY EL-ETREBY, SARA GUERRERO
AJA HOUSTON, JOHNATHON L. JACKSON, DAVID JIMENEZ°,
CARENE ROSE MEKERTICHYAN, MARA PALMA,
ROBERT PATERNO, TARA RICASA, TIANA RANDALL-QUANT,
MONIQUE SYPKENS Teaching Artists

PRODUCTION

JOE HAMLIN* Director of Production
SHANNON G. BICKNELL Production Manager
CAMBRIA CHICHI* Production Supervisor
ISAAC KATZANEK Technical Director

SHAWN ANDERSON* Head Carpenter (Ahmanson Theatre)
SCOTT LUCAS Head Properties (Ahmanson Theatre)
JARED BATTY Head Electrician (Ahmanson Theatre)
ROBERT SMITH* Head Sound (Ahmanson Theatre)
SHANE ANDERSON Head Flyrail (Ahmanson Theatre)
MICHAEL GARDNER* Wardrobe Supervisor (Ahmanson Theatre)
MARY BORGIA Hair & Make-up Supervisor (Ahmanson Theatre)
CHRISTINE L. COX* House Manager (Ahmanson Theatre)
EMMET KAISER* Head Carpenter (Mark Taper Forum)
MARY ROMERO Head Properties (Mark Taper Forum)
AARON STAUBACH* Head Electrician (Mark Taper Forum)
CHRISTIAN LEE Head Sound (Mark Taper Forum)
LORETTA BUSSEN Wardrobe Supervisor (Mark Taper Forum)

MERRIANNE NEDREBERG* Shop Director
KATE REINLIB Associate Prop Director

ERIC BABB° Assistant Prop Director
RAUL VEGA MARTINEZ° Shop Supervisor
SHANTÁ FARIA DE SA Costume Shop Manager
CAYLYN DABNEY Resident Assistant Costume Designer
ASHPHORD JACOWAY Costume Shop Coordinator

OPERATIONS

PETER WYLIE Operations & Facilities Director
CHASE ANDERSON-SHAW Kirk Douglas Theatre Manager
VANESSA DE LOERA Facilities Associate
JULIO A. CUELLAR* Facilities Assistant
JASMINE BRAFF Operations Manager
CURT GAVIN Operations Assistant
NATALIE MARCEAU, D'ANGELO ANDERSON,
SIMON J.O. MARTIN, REGINA NILES Drivers
VANESSA BRADCHULIS, OLIVIA CHOATE,
PRESSLY COKER, MONICA GREENE, PAT LOEB,
TWON POPE, SAM UDERO Stage Door Attendants

FINANCE, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, AND HUMAN RESOURCES

CHERYL SHEPHERD Chief Financial Officer
PETER BANACHOWSKI Controller
DENICE BEHAD Assistant Controller
ANAHITA ASHRAFIPOUR Senior Accountant
XOCHITL ORTEGA Accounts Payable Supervisor
KERRY LARICK° Accounting Assistant
JESSICA HERNANDEZ Payroll Manager
JUAN MARTINEZ Payroll Specialist

TOM MEGALE IT Director
JANELLE CABRERA TORRES Tessitura & Web Administration Director
JOEY SOLANO Digital Product Manager
CHIMA OMEAKU Help Desk Support
CRIS SPACCA* Tessitura & IT Support
KEVIN WONG Information Technology Intern

JODY HORWITZ* Director of Human Resources
CRISTINA TORRES Human Resources Generalist

MOSS ADAMS Auditor
MICHAEL C. DONALDSON, LISA A. CALLIF Legal Counsel
GIBSON, DUNN & CRUTCHER Legal Counsel

INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT

SARAH SULLIVAN Director of Institutional Advancement
RICKY CARTER Director of Development
CRYSTAL DIAZ Director of Events
PAMELA KUHR Director of Annual Giving
KATASHA NELSON Director of Advancement Operations
PAULA MATALLANA Associate Director of Institutional Grants
ELIZABETH DELLORUSSO* Major Gifts Officer
NICOLE SCIPIONE* Senior Individual Giving Officer
OYE EHIKHAMHEN Individual Giving Officer
ZAIN PATEL Individual Giving Officer
KATELIN URGO Individual Giving Officer
CHRISTOPHER ECKHART Donor Communications Manager
WENDY HUI Grants Manager
MIKE RATTERMAN Telefunding Manager
BK DAWSON Senior Analyst, Gift & Accounting Reporting
NICKI BONURA Advancement Associate

HAILEY BRUNSON Annual Giving Coordinator
ALICE PELAYO Donor Liasion & Institutional Advancement Assistant
IRENE CHO Executive Assistant
KRISH ADITYA Donor Events Intern
AL BERMAN*, BRAD GRIFFITH, VARTAN MERJANIAN,
BENJAMIN SCHWARTZ, PAUL VITAGLIANO Donor Advisors

MARKETING

GARRETT COLLINS Director of Marketing
CANDICE WALTERS* Associate Director, Marketing Operations
ANDRESSA ROYER Senior Manager, Audience Development & Marketing Events
DEVANY HARDEN° Manager, CRM & Email Marketing
KATHARINE MEANS° Advertising Manager
PETER SULLIVAN Marketing Coordinator
SIENA TAYLOR Theatre Archival Intern
CAROLINE THOMPSON/IMPACT 123 Media Planning

MEDIA AND CONTENT

BRETT WEBSTER Director of Media and Content
JESSICA DOHERTY* Associate Content Director
BOBBY MARTINEZ Content Associate
LILY JONES Media and Content Intern
DEANNA McCLURE Design Director
JAVIER VASQUEZ Digital Content Producer
LILA WAKILI Senior Graphic Designer
CINDY ANDRADE Graphic Designer
CHEYNE GALLARDE Graphic Designer

DAVIDSON & CHOY PUBLICITY
TIM CHOI, PETER GOLDMAN,
VICTORIA WESTBROOK Publicity Consultants

TICKET SALES AND SERVICES

SKYPP CABANAS* Senior Manager, Ticket Operations
TINTIN NGUYEN Ticketing Operations Coordinator
SANDY CZUBIAK* Audience & Subscriber Services Director
JENNIFER BAKER* Audience Services Senior Supervisors
CHERYL HAWKER* Audience Services Senior Supervisors
JONATHAN FLORES Audience Services Assistant Supervisor
JURGEN SANTOS, CHRISTIAN UNGER Audience Services Sales Associate
JESSICA ABROMAVICH, JUSTINE PEREZ* Donor Associates
JOSHUA BADILLO, CLAY BUNKER, FRANK ENSENBARGER, DANIEL GARCIA, MICHAEL MUNOZ, SAMUEL ROQUE, JURGEN SANTOS, CHRISTINA WRIGHT Audience Services Representatives
DANUTA SIEMAK* Subscriber Services Senior Supervisor
CHRISTINA GUTIERREZ* Subscriber Services Supervisor
LIGIA PISTE* Subscriber Services Senior Representatives
SARAH K. GONIA* Box Office Treasurer
KEANA JACKSON, MICHAEL VALLE* 1st Assistant Treasurers
KAITLYN GALVEZ, MICHAEL KEMPISTY*, RICHARD RUBIO, LUIS ESPINOZA 2nd Assistant Treasurers
JEFFREY LIMONCELLI, KATHLEEN LITTLEFIELD, DIANE WARD* Subscription Sales Representatives
SD&A TELESERVICES, INC. Outbound Sales Partner

ARTISTIC DEVELOPMENT & COMMISSIONS

As part of our commitment to supporting new plays and playwrights, we foster and develop a broad range of theatrical work from diverse artists locally, nationally, and abroad.

Artists creating new work commissioned by Center Theatre Group this season:

AZIZA BARNES	YOUNG JEAN LEE	CYNTHIA GRACE ROBINSON
LISA D'AMOUR	MATTHEW LOPEZ	SARAH RUHL
LARISSA FASTHORSE	ROGER Q. MASON	T.TARA TURK-HAYNES
JENNIFER HALEY	TAHIRIH MOELLER	LUIS VALDEZ
ALESHEA HARRIS	JANINE NABERS	PAULA VOGEL
GERALDINE ELIZABETH INOA	QUI NGUYEN	KAREN ZACARIAS
LISA KRON	LYNN NOTTAGE	
KIMBER LEE	MARCO RAMIREZ	

LA WRITERS' WORKSHOP

Since 2005, we have invited local playwrights to spend a year researching and writing a new work with the feedback of their fellow writers and artistic staff as part of our LA Writers' Workshop.

Learn more at CTGLA.org/Artists.

2023/24 COHORT:

AMY BERRYMAN	CHRISTOPHER OSCAR PEÑA
INDA CRAIG-GALVÁN°	RAMIZ MONSEF
ISAAC GÓMEZ	JASMINE SHARMA

LA ARTIST RESIDENCIES

DIANA BURBANO
LARISSA FASTHORSE
MICHAEL FEINSTEIN
MICHAEL JOHN GARCÉS
DANIEL ALEXANDER JONES
MADELINE SAYET
KRISTINA WONG

CRITICAL MASS PERFORMANCE GROUP
ENSEMBLE STUDIO THEATRE LA
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CHALK REP
NATIVE VOICES AT THE AUTRY