2015/16 COURT THEATRE SEASON

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO | Arts

Dear Court Theatre Family,

Thank you for joining us for Court Theatre's 61st season here in Hyde Park! This season begins with Resident Artist Ron OJ Parson directing his sixth play at Court from August Wilson's iconic Century Cycle, a canon of texts that features one play set in each decade of the 20th Century. *Gem of the Ocean* opens the cycle at the turn of the century.

We are ever grateful to Ron for his ingenuity in breathing new life into these works, which have been some of the most memorable productions in our history. In addition to creating these unforgettable theatrical experiences, Ron has also brought a vibrant collection of talented actors to our stage who have since become members of our artistic family. Collectively, the seven cast members of *Gem of the Ocean* have appeared at Court Theatre more than twenty times—an effort led by A.C. Smith who is taking on his tenth role at Court. Smith was also in *Fences*, the first August Wilson play produced at Court Theatre, which premiered 10 years ago.

There is a well-known expression often invoked in the civil rights movement that comes to mind as we tackle this play: "standing on the shoulders of giants." It is a reminder that we owe so much to the preceding generation of leadership who have constructed the platform from which we can reach even higher. At Court, we like to recognize and celebrate those who have come before us: namely, the artists who have illuminated these texts with their rich depth of talent as well as their cultural heritage.

Sadly, one of these giants passed away this summer. For over four decades Abena Joan Brown was a passionate pioneer for theatre on the South Side of Chicago. She co-founded eta (Ebony Talent Associates) Creative Arts Foundation and built it into an important force, maintaining a 210-seat theatre, a gallery space, and classrooms. Brown nurtured visual artists, numerous playwrights, and actors. She always insisted that their work at eta reflect the African American community in a positive light.

Abena Joan Brown was a graduate of the University of Chicago's School of Social Service Administration in an era when it was rare for an African American woman to be in the school. Abena often recounted her slogan for her company: "affirming the tradition, transcending the condition." She is credited with introducing generations of South Side Chicagoans to this art form and guiding them into careers in the arts. Court Theatre and all of Chicago is richer because of her work.

As we begin this new season, Court Theatre acknowledges our debt to those who paved the way as well as to all of you, our audience and patrons. We are grateful to be producing another season.

Our best,

Charles Newell, *Artistic Director*

Stephen J. Albert, *Executive Director*

court THEATRE

CHARLES NEWELL
Artistic Director

STEPHEN J. ALBERT
Executive Director

Gem of the Ocean

by August Wilson

Directed by Resident Artist Ron OJ Parson
September 10 – October 11, 2015

Scenic Design by Jack Magaw U.S.A.
Costume Design by Linda Roethke U.S.A.
Lighting Design by Heather Gilbert U.S.A.
Original Music and Sound Design by Christopher Kriz U.S.A.

Cree Rankin, *Casting*
Martine Kei Green-Rogers, *Production Dramaturg*
Sam Hubbard, *Fight Director*
Amanda Weener-Frederick,* *Production Stage Manager*
Cara Parrish,* *Assistant Stage Manager*

SETTING: 1904, the Hill District in Pittsburgh, PA
There will be a 15-minute intermission.

WARNING: Production contains water-based haze and simulated cigarette smoking.

Gem of the Ocean is presented by special arrangement with SAMUEL FRENCH INC.

Originally Produced on Broadway by
Carole Shorenstein Hays
Jujamcyn Theaters

Sponsored by

Allstate
CHICAGO'S OWN GOOD HANDS

Ron OJ Parson's artistic residency is made possible by a grant from

The Joyce Foundation

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**Denotes a member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.*

CAST

Black Mary ..... Tyla Abercrumbie*
Caesar Wilks ..... David Alan Anderson*
Aunt Ester ..... Felicia P. Fields*
Citizen Barlow ..... Jerod Haynes
Eli ..... A.C. Smith*
Solly Two Kings ..... Alfred H. Wilson*
Rutherford Selig ..... Steve Schine

Understudies:

Jennifer Bradford, Willie B. Goodson, Tiffany Renee Johnson, Layne Manzer, Wardell Julius Clark

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PRODUCTION STAFF

Production Consultant ..... William Leslie Balan-Gaubert
Assistant Director ..... Wardell Julius Clark
Muralist/Decorative Artist ..... Dorian Sylvain
Vocal Arrangements ..... Jaret Landon
Scenic Artists ..... Scott Gerwitz U.S.A., Julie Ruscitti U.S.A.
Carpenters ..... Kevin Decker, Andrew Hilder, Jacob Mulcahy, Sean Tait
Assistant Costume Designer ..... Sally Dolembo
Costume Shop Assistant ..... Stephanie Cluggish
Drapers ..... Carolyn Cristofani, Kitty Knapp, Beth Uber
Tailor ..... Fox Brothers Tailors, Inc
Stitcher ..... Alex Rutherford
Wardrobe Supervisor ..... Jody Schmidt
Wig Designer & Makeup Artist ..... Christina Carlson
Prop Artisan ..... Meredith Miller
Assistant Lighting Designer ..... Rachel Levy
Assistant Master Electrician ..... Brooks Fowler
Electricians ..... Brian Elston, Ivy Reid, Brooks Fowler, Jessica Doyle, John Millsap, Buddy Sirico, Garrett Steinke, Andrew Kauff
Interim Sound Supervisor ..... Rachel Regan
Floor Manager ..... Rebecca Ross

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Cover photo of Felicia P. Fields and Jerod Haynes (joe mazza/brave lux inc).

Court Theatre performs in the intimate Abelson Auditorium, made possible through a gift from Hope and Lester Abelson.

The video and/or audio recording of this performance by any means whatsoever are strictly prohibited.
Please turn off all phones, pagers, and chiming watches.

Court Theatre operates under an agreement between the League of Resident Theatres and Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States. Productions are made possible, in part, by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency. Court Theatre is a constituent of Theatre Communications Group, the national organization for the American Theatre, the League of Resident Theatres, the Illinois Humanities Council, Arts Alliance Illinois, and the League of Chicago Theatres.

Illinois ARTS council

ACTORS' EQUITY ASSOCIATION 1913

SDC The Director and Choreographer are members of the STAGE DIRECTORS AND CHOREOGRAPHERS SOCIETY, a national theatrical labor union.

PROGRAM SUPPLEMENT

The role of Aunt Ester is now played by JACQUELINE WILLIAMS.



JACQUELINE WILLIAMS *(Aunt Ester)* returns to Court where she appeared in *The Good Book; Caroline, or Change* (Dotty); *Fences* (Rose, Jeff award); *Electra* (title role); and *The First Breeze of Summer*. Most recently, she played Maya Angelou in the premiere *Maya's Last Poem* at Fleetwood Jourdain and Jan in *Stop. Reset.* at Goodman. She also recently appeared in *Airline Highway* at Steppenwolf, where she has also been seen in *Head of Passes, The Hot L Baltimore, The Brother/Sister Plays,* and *No Place Like Home*. Her long association with Goodman includes *Pullman Porter Blues, Camino Real, The Trinity River Plays, Blues for an Alabama Sky, The Amen Corner,* and many others. Chicago: Victory Gardens (*The Gospell of Lovingkindness* and several others), Northlight (*Gee's Bend* and *The Miser*), Next (*Yellowman* and *Fabulation*), Chicago Shakespeare, Fleetwood Jourdain, and others. Regional: LaJolla, Huntington Playhouse, ACT Seattle, Berkeley Rep, Portland Stage Co., Arena Stage, and more. Tours: *Crowns* and *Born in the RSA* with Market Theatre of Johannesburg. Broadway: *The Young Man from Atlanta.* Off-Broadway: *From the Mississippi Delta* (co-produced by Oprah Winfrey), *Mill Fire,* and *The Talented Tenth.* TV/Film: cast of *Turks*, recurring as Officer Beccera on *Chicago PD* and *Chicago Fire, Chicago Code, Prison Break, Heartlock, The Break Up, The Lake House,* and *Hardball*. Awards/Nominations: Jeff, Helen Hayes, BTAA, Lunt-Fontanne Shakespeare Fellow, 3Arts, American Arts Council, Drama Desk, Sarah Siddons, Excellence in the Arts, After Dark, among others. Jacqueline holds a BFA from Goodman/Theatre School. Her greatest blessing is her daughter, Kara.

Jacqueline Williams is a member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

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the center for CLASSIC court THEATRE

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Photo of Felicia P. Fields and Jerod Haynes by joe mazza/brave lux inc.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE



Sometimes it takes a while to realize and accept why you were put on this earth. I guess it has taken me until now, through many of life's ups and downs, to realize and accept that I was put here to make theatre.

> Baby, although I chose this lonely life
> It seems it's strangling me now ...
> Oh, I've been used
> I've been a fool oh, what a fool
> I broke all the rules, oh yeah
> But I must let the show go on ...
> I must let the show go on
> —"The Show Must Go On," Three Dog Night

Going into *Gem of the Ocean*—my 22nd production of August's work—I rediscovered the excitement I felt as a 14 year old when I directed my first play at the Studio Arena Theatre School in Buffalo, New York. It was all new to me then, and I was exploring uncharted territory—exploring new ground.

Because I have been acting and directing most of my life, there have, of course, been many ups and downs. But ever since my first August Wilson production, a 1992 production of *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* in which I both directed and played Levee, I haven't been able to find anything else that inspires such excitement in me (except maybe on the gridiron or the baseball diamond). With this production of *Gem*, we have pulled together some of my favorite actors and designers. I can only hope that you feel the excitement the entire artistic team feels as we bring this production to life.

> "I can talk about the land and I can talk about the fire. But I don't talk about the water. There was a time, Mr. Citizen, when God moved on the water. And sometime he moves on the land. Is he moving now? We don't know. We can't all the time see it." —Aunt Ester, *Gem of the Ocean*

Some young people question the relevancy of looking at the past and the importance of understanding the changes between then and now. In light of the shocking events of the past year, I think now, more than ever, we should embrace and study our past in order to create a future we can be proud of. It is a protracted struggle; we must continually fight to achieve the ultimate goal: freedom.

> "The people think they in freedom. That's all my daddy talked about. He died and never did have it. I say I got it but what is it? I'm still trying to find out. It ain't never been nothing but trouble." —Solly, *Gem of the Ocean*

For me, *Gem* truly lives up to being the beginning of August's 20th Century Cycle. We are hoping that when you leave the theatre, you will find yourself as immersed in the world of the play as we have been for the last couple of months.

> "You on an adventure, Mr. Citizen. I bet you didn't know that. It's all adventure. You signed up for it and didn't even know it." —Aunt Ester, *Gem of the Ocean*

Come, go on this adventure with us ...

–Ron OJ Parson, Director and Court Theatre Resident Artist

Photo of actor Jerod Haynes and director Ron OJ Parson by joe mazza/brave lux inc.

Behind-the-Scenes with WILLIAM LESLIE BALAN-GAUBERT

by Martine Kei Green-Rogers, Ph.D.

William Leslie Balan-Gaubert, a native of Haiti and a scholar of Haitian history and culture in residence at the University of Chicago, previously worked with Resident Artist Ron OJ Parson as a consultant during Court's 2013/14 production of *Seven Guitars*. He helped the cast understand the cultural and historical background of the character of Hedley, a Haitian American living in midcentury Pittsburgh. Balan-Gaubert has been brought on board once again by Parson to serve as a consultant for *Gem of the Ocean*. I sat down with Balan-Gaubert for a few minutes during the first week of rehearsal to discuss his role in the process.

MKG-R: William, I wanted to speak about your connection to the University of Chicago, how you became involved in Ron OJ Parson's rehearsal process, and how you are here to help craft our understanding of the spiritual aspects relevant to *Gem of the Ocean*.

WLB-G: I am a lecturer at the University of Chicago through the Department of Romance Languages and Literature and the Center for Latin American Studies. For the past few years, I have been teaching the Haitian Creole Language and salient aspects of Haitian culture. To master a language, it is helpful to understand the culture of those who speak it and the other way around. My academic interests, however, encompass philosophy, history, nineteenth century social thought, and psychology. I also have a professional interest in psychoanalysis. I am a trained hypnotist and practice hypnotherapy at the Hyde Park Chiropractic Wellness Center. My sustained interest in freeing oneself from trauma explains, in part, my interest in the play *Gem of the Ocean* and the relevance of my involvement.

MKG-R: Tell me more about your interest in the play and your involvement in the rehearsal process.

WLB-G: When Ron talked to me about it, and after I read it, I realized this play encompasses a large part of my personal and academic interests. The play has a deceptively simple plot centered around seven individuals linked in a journey of tragedy and hope. Wilson manages to expertly give voice to my interests in the trauma of the Middle Passage—the world that Africans in the diaspora

> The ocean is one of those symbolic representations of the subconscious—a metaphor for the vast expanse wherein all the answers to our most vital questions reside.

managed to birth. Wilson articulated the timelessness of African spirituality that some of us steeped in "modernity" are on the verge of losing. It is as if he is saying that if we recapture a scintilla of its wisdom, we can be healed, we can be whole. He encourages us to journey to "the City of Bones" and to find ourselves. He tapped into a source that is beyond mere words. The journey home to the City of Bones is a journey to repossess oneself [and] to recapture and regain what was seemingly lost. The gift, which our ancestors have held in trust for us, sits at the bottom of the ocean; we must become its proud custodians. When Ron approached me, and I read Aunt Ester's monologue [about the City of Bones], I felt electrified. I said, "I understand this! I am happy just to be a part of this process."

Some would say that the ancestors, through Ron OJ Parson, are guiding me to participate in a process in which I can be of some modest service. As part of my research (and personal background), I am interested in body language, which is why I pay so much attention to how actors move and how the body articulates with the voice. The utterances are merely commentaries, annotations on what the body reveals. The Haitian language is mimetic—perhaps all languages are—but historically, our forebears, during the dreadful Middle Passage, did not all speak the same language. Out of necessity they fashioned a vocabulary made of gestures, of signs and of sounds, and in due course, with words borrowed from various tongues, creating an intricate quilt [of language]. In Haiti, our traditional dances are also narratives—stories told with the body. We talk with our heads, our hands, our eyebrows, our eyes, and our whole bodies. So during rehearsal for *Seven Guitars*, I would pay attention to how the character Hedley would move—his posture, his gestures and pauses. I looked for harmony between voice and movement.

MKG-R: That is a dramaturgical act you commit when you do that. Dramaturgs are interested in the story and all the forms in which that story is told. I do much of the same at varying points in rehearsal—that is, making sure those connections are consistent.

WLB-G: I approach *Gem of the Ocean* with a deep interest in seeing that harmony and synchronicity in all of the actors, not just in Aunt Ester and Citizen Barlow, but also in Eli, Solly, Black Mary, all of them … how they form a link in a chain. I am the soulful music, the spirituals and the blues, and of course, the jazz. I look for how they dance their speech and make music with their gestures, how they express and plunge into the wisdom of African spirituality. The journey to the City of Bones is about communicating with one's being

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through trance. It is a hypnotic experience. I want to hear how the actor's voice and see how the actor's body articulate the indescribable, how it surrenders in trust, to allow the self to meet itself.

MKG-R: Let's go back into history and have you explain how you became a consultant for Ron on his August Wilson productions at Court Theatre.

WLB-G: When Ron was preparing to start work on *Seven Guitars*, he wanted Hedley, (one of the characters) to have a connection to Haiti. He wanted the actor who played Hedley to have a Haitian accent and project Haitian mannerisms. Cree Rankin (Casting Director for Court Theatre) called the department and asked around for someone who may be familiar with Haitian language and culture. He succeeded in contacting me through Facebook and made arrangements for me to meet with Ron OJ Parson. I met with Ron and he gave me a copy of the play. I read it and immediately liked it, but it was during rehearsal that I discovered how I could be useful.

I love theatre, and I have some familiarity with Court Theatre. Ifa Bayeza, the former Arts and Education Director of Court Theatre, would invite me to preview plays by French playwrights and plays with an African or Afro-Caribbean flair. I would read and reread the plays, watch, review them, participate in panels, and entertain questions from the audience. I loved doing this. So, when Ron gave me the opportunity to get involved with the theatre up close, I felt grateful and fortunate. What is more, I got to see how a gifted director works.

MKG-R: What is one important thing the audience needs to connect with in your understanding of *Gem*?

WLB-G: The journey of self. There is a connection that one must always make between health and wholeness. To be made whole is to repair what was broken. Wilson through his genius manages to capture this Truth, which permeates African spiritual traditions. One has to look within, [and] take responsibility for one's behavior. The ocean is one of those symbolic representations of the subconscious—a metaphor for the vast expanse wherein all the answers to our most vital questions reside. What is strongly suggested is a return to the source—to where fear, self-doubt, and all negative emotions began. There is something redemptive about the play. Inviting a stranger in, and discovering the stranger is you. It is not about death and dying. *It is about life!* Eli's line that ends of the play sums it all: "So live." ■



First rehearsal of *Gem of the Ocean* (joe mazza/brave lux, inc)

LIFE IS ABOVE ALL:
The Middle Passage and the City of Bones

by Martine Kei Green-Rogers, Ph.D.

The 'law of the sea' that Aunt Ester references in *Gem of the Ocean* is not a written doctrine or official dogma, but rather a powerful and respected ideology. It is a set of beliefs informed by greater truths—truths that exist beyond the physical plane and beyond the common laws created by humanity. Aunt Ester invokes the law of the sea to remind both Citizen and the audience of the greater truths that define the liminal space Citizen inhabits as he takes his journey to the mythical City of Bones.

Getting to the City of Bones is a terrifying and harrowing, yet symbolic and spiritual journey for Citizen. He must ride on a boat made from Aunt Ester's bill of sale—the piece of paper that originally sold Aunt Ester into slavery. As he takes this magical journey, he must sail through the numerous atrocities of the Middle Passage (the route across the Atlantic that brought slaves to slave-holding countries). According to the book *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora* by Stephanie E. Smallwood, "more than 700,000 Africans boarded ships bound for the New World in the first half century (1580-1640) of slave trading along the transatlantic routes that brought the Americas into the orbit of European and African worlds" (16). This journey was profoundly disorienting and violent for those who were subjected to it. The Africans who suffered this fate rarely understood who their captors were, where they were, where they were headed, and how to survive once they arrived at their final destination. Some even thought their captors wanted to make food out of them. Even more deplorable were the conditions they had to survive in order to make it to their destination. "With 300 to 400 people packed in a tiny area – an area with little ventilation and, in some cases, not even enough space to place buckets for human waste—disease was prevalent" (*Africans in America: The Middle Passage*). However, the place where Citizen lands at the end of his journey is even more (or equally) disturbing as the conditions of the passage and the realities of slavery. As Harry Elam eloquently states in the article "*Gem of the Ocean* and the redemptive power of history," Citizen travels to "a place deep down in the middle of the ocean, where, we are told, African slaves who never made it across [the Atlantic] have built a kingdom of bones" (75). Despite this place's alarming circumstances, Elam states that this act of building a city of bones in the depths of the ocean is "a proactive act of reconstructing history at the bottom of the sea" (79).

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Photo of Felicia P. Fields by joe mazza/brave lux inc.

By retracing the Middle Passage and reconstructing this violent history with an empowering, new narrative, Aunt Ester compels Citizen to reconcile his sins within the context of the suffering his ancestors faced. This reconciliation is a particularly profound moment in the play because it applies not only to Citizen, but also to the entire audience watching the journey unfold. Everyone—whether a descendant of a slave owner, a descendant of a slave, or a descendant of later immigrants—is entangled in this country's violent history of slavery. Everyone must face this truth; in the act of confronting it, American society could begin a reconstruction of history that might facilitate a paradigm shift for race and racism in America.

Tracing the routes of the slave trade illustrates that there were very few places on the globe, let alone in America, that were not touched by the slave trade in some way. It is undeniable and inescapable, no matter how one may try to bury this part of our collective global history. Even Canada—which is admired in oral lore (and even within this play) as a place for freedom for those who were enslaved—participated in the slave trade.[1]

The characters in *Gem of the Ocean* embrace or deny the city that dwells underneath the sea, representing the ambivalent attitude many Americans take toward acknowledging the violence of our shared history. As we watch the "law of the sea" come to land in the play, we learn valuable historical lessons from characters like Solly, who understands where he comes from and refuses to compromise his values for financial gain or power, and from characters like Caesar, who has assimilated into the dominant culture and embraces all of the benefits and sacrifices that come with that choice. As Elam writes in his article, "repeatedly in *Gem of the Ocean*…Wilson reminds us that the battle to remove the shackles of slavery is not simply an external struggle but an internal one" (82). These characters must make poignant, difficult choices. These choices allow us to understand how the peoples of the African Diaspora survived and thrived despite the atrocities of the Middle Passage—and at what costs. As the "law of the sea" reminds us, we are free to make our choices, but in the end, we can never escape our own fate. ■

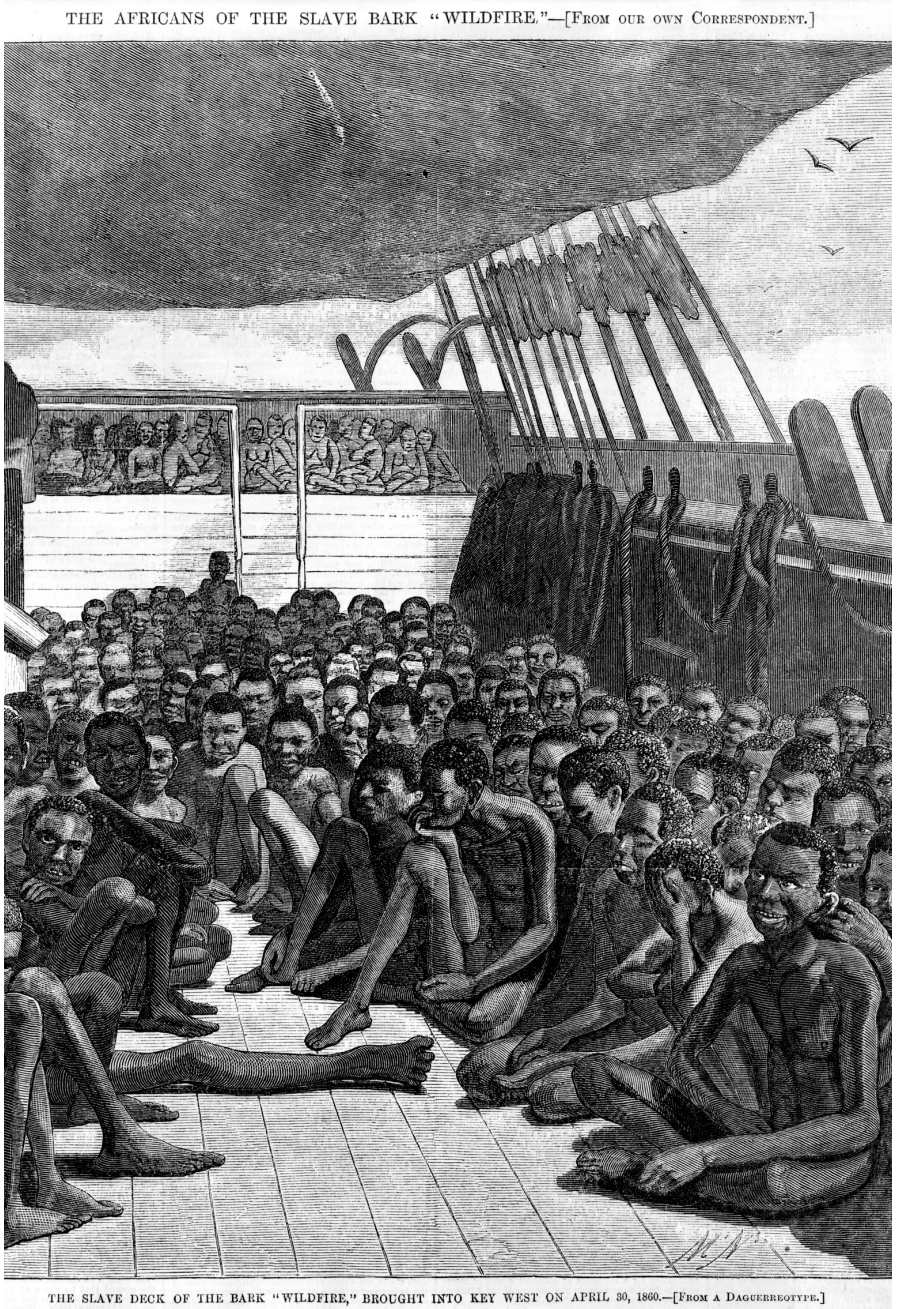
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[1] See Afua Cooper's book, *The Untold Story of Canadian Slavery and the Burning of Old Montreal*, (Toronto: Harper Perennial, 2006)



"The slave deck of the bark 'Wildfire,' brought into Key West on April 30, 1860." African men crowded onto a lower deck; African women crowded on an upper deck. Illustration in *Harper's Weekly*, June 2, 1860, p. 344. Wood engraving after daguerreotype. (Library of Congress)

ABENA JOAN BROWN *Reflections*

by Runako Jahi

First of all, I'd like to thank my friend, Mr. Ron OJ Parson, for this invitation to share my thoughts on our esteemed theatre pioneer, Ms. Abena Joan P. Brown. Having served as Artistic Director of eta Creative Arts Foundation from 1990 to 2014, in addition to being an active member of the organization since 1972, it goes without saying that I've been 80 percent theatrically and socially developed by her! In addition to Abena, I'd like to acknowledge the contributions of eta co-founder, Mr. Okoro Harold Johnson. Together, they trained and inspired a host of budding talent that came out of the Black community. To this end, many popular actors, playwrights, directors, composers, designers, and choreographers either began their journeys, or had a place to develop their craft, on the eta stage throughout the years.

Historically, Abena and Okoro created a very unique theatre family. We were encouraged to take theatre seriously. We were taught that it was not simply child's play; they were giving us a rare opportunity to develop into major artists and aspire to have fruitful careers in the industry. This is the kind of arts education that resonated with us. I was particularly engaged because I was young and Black and not good at sports! Abena and Okoro provided creative options for those of us who were young and searching for ourselves. With the encouragement of the legendary Oscar Brown, Jr., I walked into a new world and fell instantly in love with the theatre of eta Creative Arts Foundation. It was a magical experience for me because, as a Black actor at the time, schools and colleges did not consider the reality of Black theatre as a valid career option. Theatre in college seemed to be for whites only, with plays written by William Shakespeare, Eugene O'Neill, Tennessee Williams, Samuel Beckett, Bertolt Brecht, Eugene Ionesco, Jean Genet, and William Inge. These were the plays Black students were given to study under the umbrella of being noted classics. Abena, with great consistency, stressed the importance of having plays written that spoke to one's heritage because theatre, at best, is a document of life experiences, and all audiences learn something about the culture of the characters in a well-told story.

I remember an unforgettable statement Abena made over ten years ago about culture. She said, "Culture is that vehicle that drives all people. It defines us. It tells us who we are, where we've been, and where we should be going. Culture, as expressed through art, tells us how to educate our children; it

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Footlights ad

defines appropriate behavior, it defines sanctions for those who are not in compliance with the values and traditions of a people. It is very critical and special attention needs to be paid to that."

Abena and I had a conversation during the time when non-traditional casting forums were all the rage. Tennessee Williams' work was one of our topics. We discussed his backstory and the fact that he'd been raised in the Southern tradition. We agreed that Mr. Williams had not written Blanche and Stanley as Black people, whereas Lorraine Hansberry had obviously written the family in *A Raisin in the Son* to be Black because it's the only choice that supports the narrative of a Black family integrating into a white suburb. In *A Streetcar Named Desire*, the Black characters were noted in the text as Colored Woman and Negro Woman, both friends of the character Eunice who is the friend of Stanley's wife, Stella. Mr. Williams' intent was not for Blanche and Stanley to be Black. Yet, as Black theatre artists, the desire was to get an opportunity to play those great roles. As we all know, actors must explore and take on challenges. We settled with the reality that both of those plays were written with characters that were culturally specific. It is a fundamental truth that in order for artists of color to get better opportunities to hone their craft, we must have vehicles that offer those challenges. To do that, we must tell our own stories in the first voice, meaning we must perform the plays that come from our lives, written by those who have the voices to interpret their communities. However, theatres have the option to do whatever they like and cast roles according to their creative visions, which can directly conflict with this necessity.

There were those who claimed nonverbally through their programming that there was no Black theatre, but this simply wasn't true. The first known Black play was *King Shotaway* written by James Brown in 1823. Later, William Wells Brown's *The Escape: Or, a Leap for Freedom* was published in 1858, as well as volumes of works that were not heralded throughout the annals of American theatrical history. Though Lorraine Hansberry made a breakthrough with her classic *A Raisin in the Sun,* there was also Marita Bonner, Theodore Ward, Alice Childress, James Baldwin, Ishmael Reed, Joseph Walker, Amiri Baraka, Ed Bullins, Ron Milner, Ossie Davis, George C. Wolfe, Charles Fuller, Vinette Carroll, Adrienne Kennedy, Steve Carter, Lonne Elder lll, Richard Wesley, Melvin Van Peebles, Gus Edwards, and Don Evans. There was a host of brilliant playwrights whose stories were told before the shining wonder of Mr. August Wilson rocked the American theatre world with his dynamic ten-play cycle of drama, humor, and poetic truth spoken from the mouths of those whose rhythms he understood. There is also the playwright Rob Penny, a close friend of August, as well as those who opened the doors for the next round of writers, who include Shay Youngblood, Katori Hall, Regina Taylor, and Tarell Alvin McCraney.



Runako Jahi and Allison Perkins with Abena Joan Brown

Abena's legacy to theatre is multifaceted. She inspired people to take an interest in their personal development, to form their own companies, and to have their own theatre spaces. She was determined for artists to find the truth in their characters, be they actors, playwrights, or directors. She was a strong-willed, creative force of nature: a visionary, and one who spoke from her heart. She was the grand spirit mother, and like Aunt Ester Tyler in *Gem of the Ocean*, she felt it a necessity to make her "children"/community aware of where they came from and not to repeat the same mistakes of the past, thus allowing them to become whole individuals and not suffer the fragments of broken dreams. Her often cantankerous wisdom and off-putting verbiage struck some as intimidating, but many chose to look past the fireworks and focus on the always inspiring and provocative messages she had to share. Whether people appreciated it or not, she knew her advice was good.

I will cherish her memory, and even though I am no longer on staff at eta Creative Arts Foundation, what she taught me will forever be a part of my journey. ■

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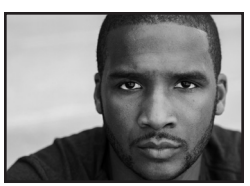
TYLA ABERCRUMBIE *(Black Mary)* was previously seen in Court Theatre's *Flyin' West* and *The Piano Lesson*. Regional credits: *Good People, Matchmaker, Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike, Grapes of Wrath, Clybourne Park,* and *You Can't Take It with You* (Asolo Repertory); *Luce* (Next Theatre); *In the Next Room, or the Vibrator Play* and *Gem of the Ocean* (Actors Theatre of Louisville); *Intimate Apparel* (Milwaukee Rep); *Radio Golf* (Pittsburgh Public Theatre); *Magnolia* (Goodman); *Romeo and Juliet* (Chicago Shakespeare Theatre); *Ariadne's Thread* (Victory Gardens); *King Hedley II* (AWTC); and a host of others. Film: the recent release of *Unexpected*. TV: *The Girlfriend Experience* (Starz Network). This season she returns to Asolo Repertory to appear in *All the Way* and *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*.



DAVID ALAN ANDERSON *(Caesar Wilks)* made his Court Theatre debut as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in *The Mountaintop*, for which he received a Jeff nomination. He is a 2013 recipient of the prestigious Lunt-Fontanne Fellowship, sponsored by the Ten Chimneys Foundation. He is a frequent performer with Indiana Repertory Theatre, where his many credits include *What I Learned in Paris,* the title role in *The Giver, The Whipping Man, Radio Golf, Romeo and Juliet, The Heavens are Hung in Black, A Christmas Carol,* the title role in *Julius Caesar*, and the one-man show *Looking Over the President's Shoulder*. He is a company member with the critically acclaimed Penumbra Theatre in St. Paul, MN, where his credits include *King Hedley II, Seven Guitars, Two Trains Running,* and *Jitney*. Selected regional credits include Troy in *Fences* at Denver Center; Walter Lee in *A Raisin in the Sun* at the Guthrie, Penumbra Theatre, Cleveland Playhouse, Arizona Theatre Co., and Kansas City Rep; *Othello* at Great Lakes Theatre and Idaho Shakespeare Festival; Kent in *King Lear* and *Othello* at Pennsylvania Shakespeare; and Sebastian in *The Tempest* at Actors Theatre of Louisville. He is represented by Paonessa Talent Agency.



FELICIA P. FIELDS *(Aunt Ester)* was last seen at Court Theatre in *Seven Guitars*. She is best known for her portrayal of Sofia in the Broadway and first touring company of the musical *The Color Purple*, for which she received a Tony nomination, Clarence Derwent Award, and several other awards. She has performed in many shows at the Marriott, Goodman, Milwaukee Rep, Drury Lane, The Broadway Theater, Northlight, Theatre at the Center, and more, as well as many productions throughout the United States and Canada, commercials, voice-overs, and films. Felicia has received several Jeff nominations, garnering one for *Sophisticated Ladies*. TV: *Chicago Fire, Sense8,* and *Who gets the dog?* When not doing theatre, she does the Blues having performed at the Chicago Blues Fest in 2014 and 2015. It gives her great joy to work with The Smiley Tillmon Band and Blues Shakin' in the Fields with Shake Anderson. After this show, she heads straight to the Cincinnati Playhouse to perform in *Low Down Dirty Blues* again with Sugar Rayford and Chic Streetman. She is very grateful to her family, Ron OJ, the wonderful people at Court Theatre, Stewart Talent, but most of all, she is grateful for God's Favor.



JEROD HAYNES *(Citizen Barlow)* was born and raised on Chicago's South Side and is excited to be back and working with Court Theatre. Last season, he appeared as Bigger in Court and American Blues Theater's production of *Native Son*. He also played Canewell in Court's production of August Wilson's *Seven Guitars* (2014, directed by Ron OJ Parson). He was recently seen as Jay (Jack Johnson) in ATC's Chicago debut of *The Royale* (2015). He was in TimeLine Theatre's production of *A Raisin in the Sun* (2013, directed by Ron

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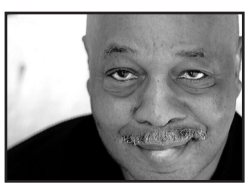
OJ Parson), in which he performed 100 shows as Walter Lee. Other theatre credits include *Columbinus* (2013) at ATC Theater. He also portrayed the role of Tom Robinson in Milwaukee Repertory Theater's production of *To Kill a Mockingbird* (2012). Other theatre credits include appearances at Chicago's eta Creative Arts in their productions of *Contribution* and *Greensboro 4: Downpayment on Manhood*. Film/TV: *Southside With You* (2016), *Empire* (FOX, 2015), *Sense8* (Netflix, 2015), *Consumed* (2015), *Betrayal* (ABC), *The Mob Doctor* (Fox), and *Crisis* (NBC). Jerod spent time in the UK, where he studied at the British American Drama Academy (BADA). He also finished the entire training program at the Acting Studio Chicago. Jerod thanks God, his family, and dedicates his work to his daughter, Jalaiya.



STEVE SCHINE *(Rutherford Selig)* is honored to be back at Court where last he went on as an understudy in *Invisible Man.* Chicago productions: *Martyr* (Steep Theatre), *Laughter on the 23rd Floor* (First Folio), *The Coward* (Stage Left Theatre), *King Lear* (Goodman Theatre), *Solstice, Hunger & Thirst, Gagarin Way, The Earl,* and *Louis Slotin Sonata* (A Red Orchid Theatre, Artistic Associate), *The City & The City* (Lifeline Theatre), *Hellcab, A Going Concern,* and *The Cider House Rules* (Famous Door Theatre), and productions with ATC, Strawdog, and Piven. Regionally: *Romeo & Juliet, Two Gentlemen of Verona, Twelfth Night,* and *Julius Caesar* (Lakeside Shakespeare) and *It's a Wonderful Life* (Clarence Brown Theatre). He also helped foster new works with Abingdon Theatre in NYC. TV: Jack Gatins in *Chicago Fire*. Video games: Ubisoft's *Watch_Dogs.* His voice can be heard in many commercials on television, radio, and the internet. Steve is a proud member of SAG-AFTRA.



A.C. SMITH *(Eli)* was most recently seen at Court Theatre as Pozzo in *Waiting for Godot.* Other shows at Court Theatre include *The Misanthrope, Tartuffe, Jitney, Invisible Man, Ma Rainey's Black Bottom, The Piano Lesson, The First Breeze of Summer,* and *Fences*, for which he received the prestigious Jeff Award for Lead Actor in a drama for his portrayal of Troy Maxon. A native of Chicago, Smith has performed at many theatres here including Victory Gardens, TimeLine Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre, Goodman Theatre, The Chicago Theatre for the Performing Arts, Illinois Theatre Centre, Second City, and Chicago Shakespeare Theater. Regional theatre credits include The Ensemble Theatre of Cincinnati, Portland Stage, Geva Theatre Center, Milwaukee Rep, Actors Theatre of Louisville, and Saint Louis Black Repertory Company where he has been a company member for the past 18 years (nine-time Woodie King, Jr. Award winner). In addition, A.C. has done film, television, radio, commercials, and voiceovers, and he has appeared in *Ebony* and *Jet* magazines. He is represented by Paonessa Talent Agency. God Bless!



ALFRED H. WILSON (*Solly Two Kings)* Recent credits: Holloway in *Two Trains Running* (Goodman Theatre), *Waiting for Godot* (Court Theatre), *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* (University of Wisconsin–Madison), *The Exonerated* (Next Act Theatre), *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* (Actor's Theatre of Louisville and Milwaukee Repertory Theater), *The Etiquette of Vigilance* (Steppenwolf Theatre), *Two Trains Running* (Geva Theatre), *"Master Harold" ...and the Boys* (TimeLine Theatre), *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom, The Piano Lesson* (Court Theatre), *Gem of the Ocean* and *Radio Golf* (Ensemble Theatre of Cincinnati), *Radio Golf* (Pittsburgh Public Theatre). Other Chicago credits include: *Bourbon at the Border* (Eclipse Theatre), *Jitney* and *Two Trains Running* (Jeff Citation–Best Actor, Pegasus Players), *Panther Burn* (MPAACT), and productions at Goodman Theatre and Victory Gardens Theatre. He was also a co-founder of Onyx Theatre Ensemble.



AUGUST WILSON *(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 theatres 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 seven 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 theatre 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.



RON OJ PARSON *(Director/Resident Artist)* hails from Buffalo, New York and is a graduate of the The University of Michigan's professional theatre program. He is a resident artist at Court Theatre, former co-founder and artistic director of Onyx Theatre, and founder of the New Onyx Theatre Project. Recent directing credits include *The Who & The What* by Ayad Akhtar (Victory Gardens Theater); *Seven Guitars* by August Wilson, *The Mountaintop* by Katori Hall, and *Waiting For Godot* by Samuel Beckett (Court Theatre); *Detroit 67* by Dominic Morisseau (Northlight Theatre); *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry (TimeLine Theatre, associate artist). Other Chicagoland theatres Ron has worked with include Black Ensemble Theatre, eta, Congo Square Theatre, Goodman Theatre, Writers Theatre (associate artist), Victory Gardens, Teatro Vista (associate artist), Chicago Dramatists, Urban Theatre Company, Steppenwolf Theatre, Chicago Theatre Company, and City Lit Theatre. Regional theatres Ron OJ has worked with include Virginia Stage Company, Portland Stage, Studio Theatre, Studio Arena Theatre, Roundabout Theatre, Mechanic Theatre, Center Stage Baltimore, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Milwaukee Rep, St. Louis Black Rep, Pittsburgh Public Theatre, Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre, Geva Theatre, Signature Theatre (New York), Alliance Theatre, South Coast Rep, and Pasadena Playhouse. In Canada, Ron directed the world premiere of *Palmer Park* by Joanna McClelland Glass at the Stratford Shakespeare Festival. Ron is a proud member of AEA, SAG-AFTRA, and SDC.

JACK MAGAW *(Scenic Designer)* most recently designed scenery for *Jitney, Home,* and *Sizwe Banzi is Dead* at Court Theatre. Recent Off-Broadway, Chicago, and regional design credits include *Rapture, Blister, Burn* (Goodman Theatre), *The Diary of Anne Frank* (Writers Theatre), *The Who & The What* (Lincoln Center Theatre and La Jolla Playhouse), *A Raisin in the Sun* (Milwaukee Repertory Theater), *Amadeus*, *Charley's Aunt,* and *South Pacific* (Utah Shakespeare Festival), *Hair: Retrospection* (Kansas City Repertory), and *The Mousetrap* (Northlight Theatre). His eight Joseph Jefferson Award nominations include designs for *Fences* (Court Theatre), *The Caretaker* and *Bus Stop* (Writers Theatre), and *The Whipping Man* (Northlight Theatre). Upcoming projects include *Long Day's Journey Into Night* (Court Theatre) and *The Flick* (Steppenwolf Theatre). Jack lives in Evanston and teaches design at The Theatre School at DePaul University. Visit www.jackmagaw.com.

LINDA ROETHKE *(Costume Designer)* Court Theatre productions include *The Good Book, Orlando, Water by the Spoonful, Arcadia*, *The Romance Cycle, James Joyce's "The Dead," The Little Foxes, Hay Fever,* and *An Ideal Husband* (Joseph Jefferson Award). Other credits include *Richard II (upcoming), Into the Woods, King Lear, As You Like It, Julius Caesar,* and *All's Well That Ends Well* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival); *Mary Page Marlowe (upcoming)*, *The Motherf**ker with the Hat, Dead Man's Cell Phone, Intimate Apparel,* and *I Never Sang for My Father* (Steppenwolf Theatre); and *Stage Kiss* and *The Clean House* (Goodman Theatre). She has also designed for The Public Theatre, Los Angeles Performing Arts Center, Kansas City Repertory, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, The Alliance Theatre, Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Northlight Theatre, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Chicago

Shakespeare Theater, Utah Shakespeare Festival, Connecticut Repertory Theatre, Arden Theatre Company, Maltz Jupiter Theatre, Drury Lane, and American Players Theatre. Linda is the director of the MFA Design Program at Northwestern University.

HEATHER GILBERT *(Lighting Designer)* previously designed *Water by the Spoonful, Home, The Comedy of Errors, The Mystery of Irma Vep,* and *What the Butler Saw* at Court Theatre. Her work as a lighting designer has been seen on many other Chicago stages including The Hypocrites (community member), Steppenwolf Theatre, Goodman Theatre, Steep Theatre, Victory Gardens Theatre, Remy Bumppo, Chicago Children's Theatre, Writers Theatre, TimeLine Theatre, About Face Theatre, and countless storefronts all over the city. Regional credits include Oregon Shakespeare Festival, American Repertory Theatre, Kansas City Rep, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Huntington Theatre, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Alley Theatre, Berkeley Rep, and Actors Theatre of Louisville. International credits include the Almeida in London and Singapore Repertory Theatre. Heather was a recipient of the NEA/TCG Career Development Grant and the 3Arts Award. Heather serves as the Head of Lighting Design at Columbia College Chicago and received her MFA at the Theatre School at DePaul.

CHRISTOPHER KRIZ *(Original Music and Sound Designer)* is an award-winning composer and sound designer. In Chicago, Kriz has designed for Goodman, Steppenwolf, Court, Writers Theatre, Victory Gardens, Northlight, TimeLine, Theatre Wit, Rivendell and many others. For his work in theatre, Kriz has been honored with 11 Joseph Jefferson Nominations and two Awards, most recently nominated for *Cicada* (Route 66) and *Mill Fire* (Shattered Globe). Upcoming and recent credits include *Carlyle* (Goodman Theatre), *Sticky Traps* (Kansas City Rep), *Sunset Baby* (TimeLine Theatre), *Mothers and Sons* (Northlight Theatre), *Fallen Angels* (Remy Bumppo), *Good For Otto* (Gift Theatre), *Mr. Burns* (Theatre Wit), *The Clean House* (Remy Bumppo), *A Kid Like Jake* (About Face), *The Grown Up* (Shattered Globe) and *The Downpour* (Route 66). Recently, Lifeline Theatre produced Kriz's new musical, *Soon I Will Be Invincible.* Kriz is a proud member of United Scenic Artists 829. To hear more of his work, please visit www.christopherkriz.com.

MARTINE KEI GREEN-ROGERS *(Production Dramaturg)* is currently an Assistant Professor of Theatre at the University of Utah. Her dramaturgical credits include: *One Man, Two Guvnors* at Pioneer Theatre Company; *Clearing Bombs* and *Nothing Personal* at Plan-B Theatre; the Classical Theatre Company's productions of *Uncle Vanya*, *Antigone*, *Candida*, *Ghosts*, *Tartuffe*, and *Shylock, The Jew of Venice*; productions of *Waiting for Godot*, *Seven Guitars*, *The Mountaintop*, *Home*, and *Porgy and Bess* at Court Theatre; *The Clean House* at CATCO; *Comedy of Errors*, *To Kill A Mockingbird*, *The African Company Presents Richard III*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Fences* at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival; *10 Perfect* and *The Curious Walk of the Salamander* as part of the 2006 and 2007 Madison Repertory Theatre's New Play Festival; and *A Thousand Words* as part of the 2008 WI Wrights New Play Festival.

SAM HUBBARD *(Fight Director)* is happy to be working at Court Theatre for the first time. Recent fight direction credits include *White Guy on the Bus* (Northlight Theatre), *Tamer of Horses* (Teatro Vista), *Lord of the Flies* (Steppenwolf for Young Adults), *Martyr* (Steep Theatre), *Hank Williams Lost Highway* (American Blues Theatre), *Watch on the Rhine* (The Artistic Home), and *Great Expectations, After Miss Julie,* and *Charles Ives Take Me Home* (Strawdog Theatre Company). Sam is a graduate of Columbia College Chicago, a member of the Society of American Fight Directors and a proud ensemble member of Strawdog Theatre Company.

WILLIAM LESLIE BALAN-GAUBERT *(Production Consultant)* is a native of Haiti and a scholar of Haitian history and culture in residence at the University of Chicago. His areas of also interests include analytic philosophy, nineteenth century European social thought, and psychoanalysis. He has studied in Haiti, France, and the United-States and has lectured extensively on topics ranging

from philosophical anthropology, the trauma of slavery, and the hypnotic aspects of Haitian Vodoun. A licensed hypnotherapist, he has analyzed the role of hypnosis in "spirit possession," the place of Vodoun in the social structure of Haiti, and the use of metaphors, symbolism, and sacred geometry in the Art of the Bizango "secret" society.

DORIAN SYLVAIN *(Muralist/Decorative Artist)* joins the Court team making her artistic contributions to the visual magic of the "City of Bones" scene in *Gem of the Ocean*. Over a three decade career, Ms. Sylvain has collaborated with theatrical, educational, and cultural institutions throughout Chicago and the Midwest as a scenic designer, muralist, curator, and educator. As an artist, she is committed to engaging children's imagination through art and the creation of artistic expressions for public spaces.

WARDELL JULIUS CLARK *(Assistant Director)* is happy to return to Court, this time on both sides of the table. Chicago theatre credits include: *A Raisin in the Sun* (TimeLine Theatre); *The Whipping Man* (Northlight Theatre); *We are Proud to Present...* and *The Gospel According to James* (Victory Gardens Theatre); *Invisible Man* (Court Theatre); *The Beats* (16th Street Theater); *Ghosts of Atwood* (MPAACT), for which he received the Black Theater Alliance Denzel Washington Award for Most Promising Actor; and *Topdog/Underdog* (American Theater Company/Congo Square Theatre). Regional credits include *The Whipping Man* (Cardinal Stage); *Cymbeline* (Notre Dame Shakespeare Festival); *Fences* (Carver Theatre); and *Big River, Much Ado About Nothing, You're a Good Man Charlie Brown, The Who's Tommy,* and *A Chorus Line* (Virginia Samford Theatre). Film/TV: *Chicago Fire.* Wardell has also appeared in numerous independent films. He holds a BFA from The Theatre School at DePaul University.

AMANDA WEENER-FREDERICK *(Production Stage Manager)* is thrilled to be spending another season with Court Theatre. Amanda previously stage managed *Water by the Spoonful, M. Butterfly, Native Son, Iphigenia in Aulis, Waiting for Godot, The Good Book,* and most recently *The Secret Garden* here at Court Theatre. Since moving to Chicago, Amanda has also worked with Lookingglass Theatre Company and Chicago Shakespeare Theater. Previously, Amanda spent eight seasons with Milwaukee Repertory Theater and seven summers with Great River Shakespeare Festival in Winona, Minnesota. Amanda is a proud member of Actors' Equity Association.



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CARA PARRISH *(Assistant Stage Manager)* is working with Court Theatre for the first time. Other Chicago credits include *Men of Soul, Sounds So Sweet, The Trial of Moses "Fleetwood" Walker, At Last: A Tribute to Etta James,* and *The Marvelous Marvelettes* at Black Ensemble Theater. At Writers Theatre, credits include *The MLK Project: The Fight for Civil Rights; Port Authority; Yellow Moon; The Letters; The Blonde, the Brunette, and the Vengeful Redhead;* and *The Caretaker*. Cara's national credits include work at Detroit Music Hall (Detroit, MI), The Fabulous Palm Springs Follies (Palm Springs, CA), Chamber Theatre Productions (Boston, MA), and The Hippodrome State Theatre (Gainesville, FL). Cara would like to thank her family and friends for all of their love and support.



CHARLES NEWELL *(Artistic Director)* was awarded the SDCF Zelda Fichandler Award, "which recognizes an outstanding director or choreographer who is transforming the regional arts landscape through singular creativity and artistry in theatre." Charlie has been Artistic Director of Court Theatre since 1994, where he has directed over 50 productions. He made his Chicago directorial debut in 1993 with *The Triumph Of Love*, which won the Joseph Jefferson Award for Best Production. Charlie's productions of *Man of La Mancha* and *Caroline, Or Change* have also won Best Production Jeffs. Other directorial highlights at Court include *The Secret Garden, Iphigenia at Aulis, The Misanthrope, Tartuffe, Proof, Angels In America, An Iliad, Porgy and Bess, Three Tall Women, Titus Andronicus, Arcadia, Uncle Vanya, Raisin, The Glass Menagerie, Travesties, Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?, The Invention of Love,* and *Hamlet*. Charlie has also directed at Goodman Theatre *(Rock 'N Roll)*, Guthrie Theater *(The History Cycle, Cymbeline)*, Arena Stage, John Houseman's The Acting Company (Staff Repertory Director), the California and Alabama Shakespeare Festivals, Juilliard, and New York University. He has served on the Board of TCG, as well as on several panels for the NEA. Opera directing credits include Marc Blitzstein's *Regina* (Lyric Opera of Chicago), *Rigoletto* (Opera Theatre of St. Louis), *Don Giovanni* and *The Jewel Box* (Chicago Opera Theater), and *Carousel* (Glimmerglass Festival). Charlie was the recipient of the 1992 TCG Alan Schneider Director Award, and has been nominated for 16 Joseph Jefferson Director Awards, winning four times. In 2012, Charlie was honored by the League of Chicago Theatres with their Artistic Achievement Award.



STEPHEN J. ALBERT *(Executive Director)* is a founding Partner in Albert Hall & Associates, LLC a leading arts consulting firm. Prior to forming the consulting practice, Albert was recognized as a leading arts manager. He has led some of America's most prestigious theatres, including the Mark Taper Forum/Center Theatre Group, Alley Theatre, and Hartford Stage Company. Albert began his career with the Mark Taper Forum/Center Theatre Group in Los Angeles where he worked in senior management positions for over a decade, rising to Managing Director. He went on to become Executive Director of Houston's Alley Theatre where he led a turnaround that stabilized the organization, enabling the Alley to return to national standing and drove a capital campaign that secured the organization's future. At Hartford Stage, his partnership with Mark Lamos resulted in some of the theatre's most successful seasons and reinforced Hartford Stage's position at the forefront of the regional theatre movement. During his tenure in Hartford, Mr. Albert led the initiative to create a 25,000 square foot, state-of-the-art production center, securing the donation of the facility and the funding for its renovation. Albert has served as both President and Vice President of the League of Resident Theatres (LORT) and as a board member of Theatre Communications Group (TCG). He has also written and produced a variety of productions for television, is an ACE award nominee, and has been an associate producer of numerous acclaimed Broadway productions. He is a Senior Fellow with the American Leadership Forum, a graduate of the University of Southern California and holds an MBA from the UCLA Graduate School of Management.

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