

THE JUDITH CHAMPION MIXFEST

(WRIT)UAL MIX:

Traditions of the Diaspora

A FREE READING SERIES
PLAY FESTIVAL

AUGUST 7 – 16, 2023

CO-CURATED BY

Daaimah Mubashshir, NSangou Njikam & Awoye Timpo

Artistic Director
Neil Pepe

Associate Artistic Director
Annie MacRae

Associate Producer
Abigail Katz

We acknowledge that the Atlantic Theater & School buildings were built on the occupied traditional lands of the Lenape people. We are grateful to the Indigenous caretakers of these lands and honor the Lenape Tribes who continue to thrive today.

(WRIT)UAL MIX

BURNBABYBURN: an american dream

By **a.k. payne**

Directed by **Awoye Timpo**

Tuesday, August 8 | 7pm

Char

Grace Porter*

Myrna

Rosalyn Coleman*

Sky

Abigail C. Onwunali*

William

Anthony Holiday*

Joyner

Anthony Grace

Sky II

Alicia Pilgrim*

Stage Directions

Brittany-Laurelle*

Stage Manager

Mandisa Reed*

**Members of Actors' Equity Association*

a.k. payne (Playwright) is a playwright, artist-theorist, and theatermaker with roots in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Her plays love on and engage Black lives and languages beyond the confines of linear time to find/remember stories that might create conditions for our collective liberation(s). They hold a B.A. in English and African-American Studies from Yale College and an MFA in Playwriting under Tarell Alvin McCraney from fka Yale School of Drama. Their work has been a finalist for the L. Arnold Weissberger New Play Award, the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize and the Bay Area Playwrights Festival. She is a recipient of the David Mark Cohen National Playwriting Award, the Kemp Powers Commission Fund for Black Playwrights and Atlantic Theater Company's Judith Champion Launch Commission. Their work has been developed with the O'Neill National Playwrights Conference, The New Harmony Project, Great Plains Theater Conference, and Manhattan Theater Club's "Groundworks Lab." They are a proud graduate of Pittsburgh Public Schools; grandchild of the Great Migration; descendant of a music teacher and a carpenter, who both march every year with their unions in Pittsburgh's Labor Day parade; a queer & non-binary abolitionist affected in community by the "New Jim Crow;" and of a great lineage of Black women storytellers and living-room archivists; all of which deeply informs, uplifts and amplifies their work as a playwright, community organizer and spacemaker.

AWOYE TIMPO (Director) is a Brooklyn-based Director and Producer. Her New York credits include *Elyria* by Deepa Purohit (Atlantic Theater), *Wedding Band* by Alice Childress (Theatre for a New Audience), *In Old Age* by Mfoniso Udofia (New York Theatre Workshop), *The Loophole* by Jay Adana and Zeniba Britt (Public Theater), *Carnaval* by Nikkole Salter (National Black Theatre), *Good Grief* by Ngozi Anyanwu (Vineyard Theatre and Audible) and *The Homecoming Queen* by Ngozi Anyanwu (Atlantic Theater Company). Regionally she has directed *The Bluest Eye* (Huntington), *Pipeline* (Studio Theatre), *Paradise Blue* (Long Wharf), *Everybody Black* (Actors Theatre of Louisville), *School Girls* (Berkeley Rep), *Jazz* (Marin Theatre Company). Other projects include concert performances for independent artists and for the NBA, *Ndebele Funeral* (59E59, Edinburgh, South African Tour), "Black Picture Show" (Artists Space/Metrograph), and *Bluebird Memories* (Audible). Awoye is a Creative Arts Consultant for the African American Policy Forum and a Founding Member of CLASSIX.

ROSALYN COLEMAN (*Myrna*) is a director, educator, and actor. Broadway: *To Kill A Mockingbird*, *Travesties*, *The Mountaintop*, *Radio Golf*, *Seven Guitars*, *The Piano Lesson*, *Mule Bone*. Film: (upcoming) *Rob Peace*, *Game Nite*, *Miss Virginia*, *The Immortal Jellyfish*, *Frankie and Alice*, *Brooklyn's Finest*, *Our Song*, *Brown Sugar*, *Musica of the Heart*. TV: "Terror Lake Drive," "Bull," "Jessica Jones," "Blue Bloods," "Madam Secretary," "Law and Order". Off-Broadway: *Wedding Band*, *The Woman's Party*, *Native Son*, *Breakfast with Mugabe*. Solo play *The Master's Tools* at Williamstown Theatre Festival. Next feature film: *Weapon For Peace* director. Proud mom & wife. Love you. @irozapp

ANTHONY GRACE (*Joyner*) (he/X) is an actor and writer from Cleveland, Ohio. X has been seen in productions at Long Wharf Theatre, University Theatre, Cleveland Playhouse, Karamu House, Convergence-Continuum, and the New York Theatre Workshop. X's play *Van Sonata* has been developed at Cleveland Public Theatre and the Yale Cabaret. MFA: Yale School of Drama

ANTHONY HOLIDAY (*William*) also known as "Holiday" is honored to be making his way back to Atlantic, his old stomping grounds for the work with a close collaborator and friend a.k. Payne. Holiday most recently performed in a movement and poetry piece *Listening with Drake Park* under the direction & cultivation of Aletha Pace who is in residence at The Met. He made his first professional regional debut in *The Amen Corner* by James Baldwin in 2022. Other regional credits include *The Sign in Sidney Brustein* in the beginning of 2023. He is a graduate of the Yale School of Drama/DGSD class of 2021-2022. There he has trained in Acting where he recently received his Master's. Holiday has been seen in productions of; *Choir Boy* by Tarrell Alvin McCraney, *Manning* by Benjamin Benne (Julio), *Dutch King* by Kristen Imani Spencer (Ismael), *Ain't no dead thing* (Charles) by a.k. Payne, *Mr. Burns* by Anne Washburn (Homer, Marge), *Measure for Measure* (Claudio), *Locust* (Amos) by Chris Gabo, *Lenny's Fast Food Kids Gang* (Walter) by Angie B. Jones under the conglomerate of his professors, cohort and school-mates. Holiday is also a recent graduate of the Atlantic "Full Time" Conservatory with a certificate in acting wherein he has been seen in the production *Last Days of Judas Iscariot* (El Fayoumy) by Stephen Adly Guirgus. Upon graduation, he was a part of *This girl laughs, this girl cries, this girl does nothing* (Fleeing Villager/City Man 1) by Finnegan Kruckmeyer. Holiday is from New Jersey born and raised and also a graduate of Brookdale Community College wherein he received his Associates Degree in acting/humanities.

BRITTANY-LAURELLE (*Stage Directions*) is an Actress, Storyteller, and Poet from Harlem, NY. She is thrilled to be a part of the (Writ)ual Mix Readings. Brittany-Laurelle was most recently seen in *Wedding Band* (TFANA) and *The Bluest Eye* (The Huntington). Deep gratitude to LaGuardia High School for Performing Arts and Adelphi University for open spaces to fine tune the art of storytelling. Thank you to all who honor the Art! Instagram: @whoisbrittanylaurelle

ABIGAIL C. ONWUNALI (*Sky*) is a multi-faceted Nigerian-American theater maker who recently graduated from David Geffen School of Drama at Yale. Her acting credits include Charly Evon Simpson's *it's not a Trip it's a Journey* at the Chautauqua Theater Conservatory; *for the honey you gotta say when* at the New York Theater Workshop; *Valor* at the Guthrie; *Rent Free*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Swimmers*, *Love I Awethu Further*, and *Love Labors Lost* at the School of Drama; *Is God Is* and *BumBabyBum* at the Yale Cabaret; *Twelfth Night* with the Shakesperience Theater Company. She is a graduated acting fellow of Lena Waithe's Hillman Grad Mentorship Program. She was the 2022 John Gore Princess Grace award winner. She served as the Associate Artistic Director of the 2021-22 Yale Cabaret where, in addition to performing, she has directed projects and a number of plays she has written have been produced like *#4*, *In Between Bitches*, and *Ikenga in Wahalaland*. Abigail's play, *Jewel*, was one of the 2021 Red Bull Theater's Short New Play Festival winners, and her slam poems have been viewed worldwide.

ALICIA PILGRIM (*Sky II*) was born and raised in Washington, D.C. She attended Duke Ellington School of the Arts. There she learned the sacred and moral obligations of storytelling. She then took her studies to SUNY Purchase Acting Conservatory where she grew an even deeper sense of community. Alicia was most recently seen at the Eugene O'Neill Playwrights Convention collaborating on a.k. payne's *Love I Awethu Further*, the Drama Desk nominated play *Cullud Wattah* at The Public where she was also nominated for an Antonyo Award for Best Featured Actress in a Play, and can be seen as Najja in the second season of "Random Acts Of Flyness" on HBO Max, as well as the Sundance Grand Jury Prize winning film *A Thousand And One*. She thanks her friends, family, ancestors, and GOD for their endless love and support.

GRACE PORTER (*Char*) is a New York based, multi-hyphenated artist, originally from Pasadena, California. She recently made her Broadway debut in Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* as Letta/Jazz Singer. She has been seen in the Williamstown production of *Lempicka*, The Public Theater's Mobile Unit production of *Measure For Measure*, the Multi-Media instillation experience *Definition*, and The Public Theater's Shakespeare in the Park production of *Richard III*. TV credits include "Madam Secretary", "Prodigal Son", "Blue Bloods" and is currently recurring on "GodFather of Harlem" as Dr. Betty Shabazz. Movie credits include *Figments* (short), *Under a Silver Moon* (short), *Spoiler Alert: The Hero Dies*, and *Clock*. BA: Pepperdine University; MA: NYU/Tisch Grad Acting.

MANDISA REED (*Stage Manager*). Broadway (select credits): *Topdog/Underdog*, *Skeleton Crew*, *Lackawanna Blues*. National Tour: *Jitney*. MFA, UCSD. Proud HBCU graduate, Dillard University. Grateful to be in this room and a part of this process.

Monday, August 7 | 7pm

PANEL DISCUSSION - ROOTS, RHYME, AND REASON:

Traditions of Black Storytelling

moderated by **Dr. Sybil R. Williams**

Tuesday, August 8 | 7pm

BURNBABYBURN: an american dream

by **a.k. payne**

directed by **Awoye Timpo**

Wednesday, August 9 | 7pm

GOOD BLOOD

by **Diane Exavier**

directed by **Cristina Angeles**

Monday, August 14 | 7pm

SHORT PLAYS

by **Dennis A. Allen II, Keelay Gipson, Amina Henry,**

Goldie E. Patrick & Liza Jessie Peterson

directed by **Raelle Myrick-Hodges & Derrick Sanders**

Tuesday, August 15 | 7pm

A FREEKY INTRODUCTION

by **NSangou Njikam**

directed by **Dennis A. Allen II**

Wednesday, August 16 | 7pm

THE IMMEASURABLE WANT OF LIGHT

by **Daaimah Mubashshir**

directed by **Colette Robert**

SPECIAL THANKS

David Callahan, Kirk Curtis, Braley Degenhardt, Dylan Gervais, Julianne Graffeo, Mark Thomas Johnson, John Lagucki, Clare McCormick, Melissa Rocha, Bailey Sawyer, Sarah Shapiro, Jared Solomon, Barbara Toy

Judith Champion, who also underwrote Atlantic's Launch commissioning program, sadly passed away in July of 2022. She was a fierce advocate for theater, and wanted to leave a legacy of support for new voices so that American theater will thrive for generations to come.

(Writ)ual Mix and all of Atlantic's new play and musical development activities are made possible through the support of The Max and Victoria Dreyfus Foundation and the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation.

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