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2021–22 Season at the Lederer Theater Center

under the direction of

Curt Columbus

The Arthur P. Solomon and Sally E. Lapides Artistic Director **Jennifer Canole**

Interim Executive Director

August Wilson's Gem of the Ocean

DIRECTED BY JUDE SANDY

THE ARTISTIC TEAM

Directed by Jude Sandy *‡ Assistant Directed by Taavon Gamble*‡ Music Direction by Michael Évora Movement and Ritual Direction yaTande Whitney V. Hunter Set Design by Michael McGarty Costume Design by LeVonne Lindsay Lighting Design by Alejandro Fajardo Original Music & Sound Design by Broken Chord Production Stage Managed by Alec E. Ferrell* Assistant Stage Managed by Amanda Kosack*

February 24, 2022 - March 27, 2022

in the Elizabeth and Malcolm Chace Theater

Gem of the Ocean is performed with an intermission.



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THE CAST

Eli Dereks Thomas* Citizen Barlow Christopher Lindsay Aunt Ester Tyler Rose Weaver* Black Mary Liz Morgan* Rutherford Selig Mauro Hantman* ‡ Solly Two Kings Ricardo Pitts-Wiley* Caesar Wilks Joe Wilson, Jr.*‡

- * Denotes member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers.
- **‡** Trinity Rep Resident Company member

Trinity Rep gratefully acknowledges the past support of the B.B. Lederer Sons Foundation, the State of Rhode Island, and the City of Providence. This activity is made possible in part by a grant from the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts, through an appropriation by the Rhode Island General Assembly, a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and private funders.

"August Wilson's Gem of the Ocean" is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc. www.concordtheatricals.com

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FROM THE ARTHUR P. SOLOMON AND SALLY E. LAPIDES ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



WELCOME TO TRINITY REP'S PRODUCTION OF AUGUST WILSON'S GEMOFTHE OCEAN.

I am so thrilled to welcome you back to the Chace Theater, and I am particularly thrilled to share this great play

with you. Of all of Mr. Wilson's American Century Cycle plays, this one has been a personal favorite of mine since I first saw it nearly twenty years ago in the spring of 2003 at the Goodman Theatre in Chicago. I have been eager to produce it for years now, and it has found its perfect life at Trinity with this extraordinary creative team.

Although the play was first produced near the end of Wilson's life, *Gem of the Ocean* takes place in 1904, chronologically at the beginning of the Cycle. In so many ways, it is a companion to the final play in the Cycle *Radio Golf*, which we produced in 2020. That play ends the 20th century, as well as the author's investigation of the ordinary yet historic lives of the people in the Hill District of Pittsburgh, but *Gem of the Ocean* also features the literal forebearers of the characters in *Radio Golf*. Both Harmond Wilks (played brilliantly by company member Joe Wilson, Jr. in our production two

years ago) and Elder Joseph Barlow (incomparably inhabited by the incomparable Ricardo Pitts-Wiley) are descended from the characters in this play. *Gem of the Ocean* is necessary viewing for anyone who enjoyed *Radio Golf*, as it will enrich the experience of that great play even further.

Director Jude Sandy's production of *Radio Golf* thrilled Trinity Rep audiences in February of 2020, and he returns to give us a gem of a staging for this great play (so sorry, I couldn't resist). In his interview in the *Tiny Beautiful Things* show program last month, Jude talked about the philosophical differences between the plays:

"Radio Golf is anchored in realism and individualism while Gem of the Ocean invokes an immense spiritual and communal realm that is known to many African-Americans, but less fully appreciated by the rest of our culture. With Radio Golf set in the 1990s as a kind of schismatic Black success story that questions the costs for African-American citizenship in this society, it felt vital for us to experience the other end of Wilson's narrative arc. Gem of the Ocean sees a community of African-Americans grappling with a nominal freedom of abolition and the short-lived Reconstruction period aborted by resurgent forces of white supremacy that tried to return African-Americans to effective enslavement with Jim Crow laws. It is a story in which Black people are officially free, but in reality are not. Gem of the Ocean takes a look at what it takes to restore the spirit of solidarity needed to return to the battle for a freedom that's deeper than legislated liberties."

It is this "spiritual and communal realm" that rings throughout this play. As I mentioned in my letter when we produced *Radio Golf*, Wilson has a singular ability to layer the multiple musicalities into seemingly naturalistic language. Take as a vivid example the name of the young protagonist in this play, Citizen Barlow. His name immediately places the question of citizenship into the air of the theater, and yet nothing more needs to be explicitly said. Indeed, the other names in this play all resonate with deep meaning; some evoke Old Testament kings and queens (Ester, Solomon, David), while others (Eli, Mary, Caesar) hold different biblical significance. Every word in this play is filled with gorgeous meaning and life.

In fact there are multiple layers woven throughout August Wilson's work – when the mythic meets the quotidian, when the historic intersects with the now – and this is especially true in *Gem*. It takes a great team of artists to bring all of the layers vividly to life. The company of artists assembled, led by director and company member Jude Sandy, are truly great. I can't wait to experience this play through their work, and with you.

592

Curt Columbus
The Arthur P. Solomon and
Sally E. Lapides Artistic Director



FROM THE INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



MAGIC. ENERGY. CONNECTION. LIVE THEATER IS LIKE NOTHING ELSE.

It resonates and reverberates through the space we're in – both physically and emotionally. Every performance a collective journey, with surprises

and discoveries along the way.

Whether you've been away for a while (like we were) or whether this is your first time experiencing a production at Trinity Rep, we are so happy to have you with us, in the theater, in person. Thank you for joining us for August Wilson's *Gem of the Ocean*.

We are taking this entire season as an opportunity to reintroduce Trinity Rep to the community. As live performances were paused, we spent much of 2020 and 2021 in deep introspection,

listening, learning, and building strategies to become a more diverse, equitable, inclusive, and anti-racist organization. Some of the changes you'll see firsthand – like the land acknowledgement, which you'll hear before today's show begins and which you can read on page 28 and our audience agreement, found on page 14. Our Director of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism wrote about our additional efforts on page 10. Others are less visible – like a more humane rehearsal schedule and ongoing anti-racism training. But the results of these long overdue changes, and our continued learning, adjustments, and improvements, will be felt for many years to come. We are excited for what the future holds.

As I write this letter in mid-January, the search for Trinity Rep's next executive director continues with our search committee (comprised of trustees, artists, and staff) working closely with our search firm to identify the best candidate to lead us into the future. For the most up-to-date news, check www.trinityrep.com/EDsearch.

Our artistic team is deep in planning for our 2022-23 Season, which we will announce in April. Early Bird subscriptions will go on sale in March

with five-show packages starting at just \$95. While I've been sworn to secrecy, I can confirm that it is an incredibly exciting lineup that you won't want to miss. Be sure to secure your subscription soon to lock in these discounted rates and your seats.

Finally, I want to thank everyone who has made a gift to Trinity Rep over the past few months. Your contributions and words of support have helped us navigate these challenging pandemic waters. Your continued generosity buoys our spirits and helps ensure that these collective journeys continue.

Thank you for being here.

Warmly,

genniger Canole

Jennifer Canole
Interim Executive Director

Reuniting with Rose Weaver

Former company member returns to Trinity Rep after 20 years.

by Laura Weick

On a chilly winter day in Rhode Island, Rose Weaver calls in from the warm sunshine of Georgia. Living about half an hour from downtown Atlanta, the actress, singer, speaker, and writer moved there from Providence last summer to be closer to her family. She grew up in the South before heading to New England for college, and has spent much of her professional career back and forth between Rhode Island and Los Angeles. Coming back to Georgia, Rose says, was an important way to connect with her roots.

"My whole community of fans and friends are in Rhode Island, so I knew I would miss them a lot," Rose says. "But when COVID hit, I was alone, and I realized I wanted to go home with my family."

That didn't mean Rose had no plans to come back to Rhode Island, of course. When she announced her initial departure, she made it clear that she'd return at times to visit friends and complete new projects. One of the first of these new projects? Trinity Rep's production of *Gem of the Ocean*.

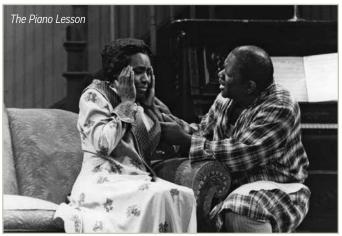
Rose has a long history with Trinity Rep: she first joined the company in 1973 as an acting fellow, making her Trinity Rep debut in *Brother to Dragons*. After performing in shows such as *The Boys from Syracuse, Another Part of the Forest*, and multiple productions of *A Christmas Carol*, she left Rhode Island in 1984 to land film and television roles in Hollywood. Then she returned to the state a few years later, appearing in shows like *The School for Scandal*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom, Into the Woods, Measure for Measure*, and *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill* at Trinity Rep. 2001's *The Piano Lesson*, also an August Wilson play, was the last time she appeared on the Trinity Rep stage.

"It's almost like returning to a love of my life," Rose said of coming back this season. "I'm returning to the Trinity stage in a really great role, and this role, Aunt Ester, means a lot to me."

Aunt Ester, pronounced like "ancestor," is a 285-year-old former slave and the matriarch of the household on 1839 Wylie Avenue. *Gem of the Ocean* takes place in 1904, so if you do the math based on her age, Aunt Ester's birth year is 1619: the year the first enslaved Africans arrived in what's now the United States. She is renowned for her soul-cleansing abilities, and her wisdom drives the play's plot.

Rose isn't new to the works of August Wilson: as mentioned, she's been in *The Piano Lesson* and *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, but she's also participated in readings of other Wilson plays. To prepare for a role as legendary as Aunt Ester, Rose has done plenty of research. She had been reading about African enslavement, especially in Rhode Island, before being cast, and considered what she learned when getting into the mind of the soul-cleanser.

"This character is incredible, and she is so strong," Rose remarked.





"Staying in touch with Brown University has given me a wonderful knowledge about slavery, but also African traditions and rituals carried across generations. I've been trying to understand the rituals that Aunt Ester would know. She's 285 years old, so I'm thinking about what her childhood is like, shedding an ocean of tears as she was coming across the Atlantic, and thinking about the slaves who didn't make it. I want to understand her from the inside out."

The youngest of six children in a Georgia sharecropping family, Rose moved to Atlanta as a child during the height of the Civil Rights Movement. Rose participated in theater and choir in high school, which she credited to building her self-esteem and introducing her to her career path.

"I was bused to an all-white school, and I was spit on," Rose said. "Had it not been for that experience in the drama and music department, I don't know where I'd be. It helped me to gain a little bit of confidence, since my back was hunched from all of the Jim Crowe bullshit. Even singing with the choir taught me to speak up for myself more."

After graduating from college, Rose planned on becoming an arts administrator. She loved performing but being the first in her family to go to college, she wanted a stable career that would support her mother and her son, whom she had as a teenager. While singing at an event she put together for the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts (RISCA), the father of state senator Josh Miller told her she should try out for shows at Trinity Rep. Rose soon auditioned for Founding Artistic Director Adrian Hall, who swiftly selected her as an acting fellow.

After her first experiences at Trinity Rep, Rose took some time away from the theater to break into television and film. But she noticed that there





weren't many roles for Black women on screen – and in theater - at the time. Rose said that while opportunities for Black actors have improved since the beginning of her career, citing former Trinity Rep actress Viola Davis as an example, there is still a ways to go when giving Black actors opportunities and representation. That's one reason why during the pandemic, she created The Directory of Black Artists in Rhode Island, so folks looking for Black artists in the state could know where to find them.

Rose also recalled how when Buddy Cianci was mayor of Providence, she was an artist-in-residence for several public schools. Here, she'd work with students on performance and poetry, many of which had the goal of building marginalized students' self-esteem.

"Once in a while someone sees me and recognizes me from a show, and it brings such joy to me, especially when it's a young person," Rose remarked. "Helping kids, especially kids of color to not give up, that was the theater for me. Even though I felt discriminated against quite often, I still felt I had to do this for them. Theater has helped me walk in other people's shoes, so maybe we can understand and have empathy with what other people go through, and we might love each other more, by walking in the shoes of so many characters."

Later in her career, Rose would return to Trinity Rep and split her time between Rhode Island and California. It was during this period that she appeared in what may be her most well-known Trinity Rep show: 1994's *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill*, based on Billie Holiday's final performances before her death in 1959. Rose portrayed the legendary jazz singer in what was the longest consecutively running production at Trinity Rep at the time (2019's *The Prince of Providence* has since surpassed the record).

As Billie Holiday, Rose got to showcase her award-winning singing voice. Rose also enjoyed the role because she was a character that she felt she could really get into the head of. She hopes that the same happens when she plays Aunt Ester.

"Billie got so into my being that I had to go to a yoga retreat to get her out of me," Rose said. "After a few sessions of reiki, I felt power surge in me and I burst into tears. It was like a force that came out of my chest."

Sometimes, to really get into your characters, you have to write them yourself. Before and after earning her MFA in creative writing from Brown University at 50, Rose wrote multiple plays, including *Skips in the Record*, partially based on her own experience when her grandmother died of Alzheimer's disease. Another show she wrote, *Menopause Mama*, addresses the experiences of menopause, womanhood, and life as an older woman –

something that is not often centered in modern media. She earned a RISCA grant for this show and used it to tour it around the state.

Going forward, Rose said she'll continue to write, as well as take film and stage roles that interest here. This year, she and *Gem* co-star Ricardo Pitts-Wiley will appear in the film *About Fate* starring Emma Roberts.

"I'm getting older but I still want to do good work while protecting my health," Rose said. "I'm not afraid of death, and I know we're all gonna die, but I want to be able to say what I did. Like Aunt Ester says, it's about what you do in-between birth and death that counts."





The 20th Century Through the Eyes of August Wilson

By Caitlin Howle

August Wilson was an American playwright best known for his series of ten plays known as *The American Century Cycle*, each of which is set during a different decade of the 20th century. The first of the cycle is *Gem of the Ocean*. Sometimes referred to as the *Pittsburgh Cycle*, nine of the ten plays are set in Pittsburgh's Hill District area, with the outlier, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, set in Chicago. Some characters appear in multiple plays, aging and changing as time passes. Though the plays were not written in chronological order, they are listed here in the order Wilson intended them to be seen:



Gem of the Ocean (1900s)

Aunt Ester (think "ancestor") is a 285-year-old former slave known as a teller of history and cleanser of souls. Citizen Barlow, a new arrival to Pittsbugh's Hill District, needs Aunt Ester to help him with the guilt he feels for a crime he has committed. Citizen must make peace with what happened by taking the legendary slave ship, Gem of the Ocean, to the City of Bones — a place known only in myth. Through his ancestors he learns who he is and tries to lead others toward freedom after a tragic fire and misguided thoughts about slavery. Gem of the Ocean premiered at The Goodman Theatre in Chicago in 2003

Joe Turner's Come and Gone (1910s)

Harold Loomis and his young daughter Zonia have returned to Pittsburgh to leave the poverty and Jim Crow laws of the South, where he was kidnapped and separated from his family by a bounty hunter named Joe Turner. Looking for Harold's wife, Martha, the pair arrives at a Pittsburgh boarding house, where the story turns into an intricate tale of spirituality and dealing with a past that continues to haunt them. *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* premiered at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre on Broadway in 1988.

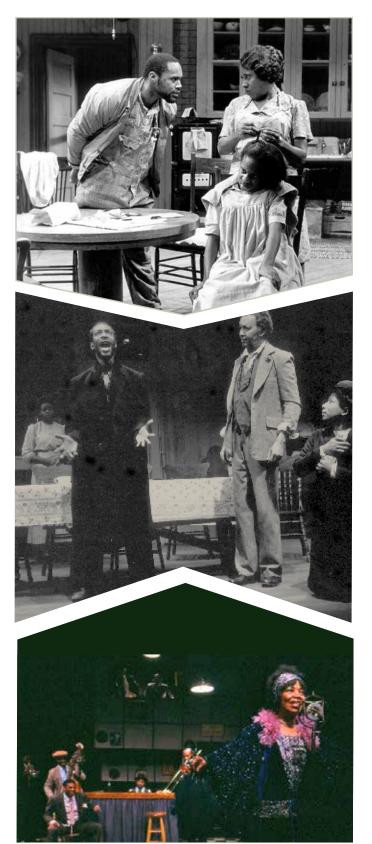
Ma Rainey's Black Bottom (1920s)

This is the only play in the American Century Cycle not set in Pittsburgh. Ma Rainey is a blues singer in Chicago who knows that her music is being exploited to profit her white producers. She sees the blues as a way of understanding life, especially during this time of segregation and legal discrimination. Ma Rainey and her band members deal with the day-to-day frustrations of exploitation, especially with their music, and the story ends with no resolution, reflecting the challenges still facing many Black Americans today. Ma Rainey's Black Bottom opened in 1984 at Yale Repertory Theater and moved to Broadway's Cort Theatre. A movie adaptation starring former Trinity Rep actor Viola Davis premiered in 2020, and was nominated for multiple Academy Awards.

The Piano Lesson (1930s)

During the aftermath of the Great Depression, the story follows the lives of the Charles family and their beloved piano. Boy Willie and his sister Berniece bicker constantly about whether or not to keep this heirloom, knowing that they could sell it, but that it also holds their family history. Its first staged reading was at the 1986 National Playwrights Conference and first production was at the Yale Repertory Theatre in 1987. The show won the 1990 Pulitzer Prize for drama.

Productions pictured, from top to bottom: Radio Golf, Ma Rainey's Black Bottom, Fences



Productions pictured from top to bottom: *The Piano Lesson, Joe Turner's Come and Gone, Ma Rainey's Black Bottom.*

Seven Guitars (1940s)

The story begins and ends directly after the funeral of Floyd "Schoolboy" Barton, an ex-con recently released from jail. Between these two bookends a series of flashbacks reveal how Floyd almost made it big as a blues singer until his untimely murder. The play shows just how hard it is to be an African-American man in a world that's stacked against you. It premiered in 1996 at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center.

Fences (1950s)

Troy was once a star player in the Negro baseball league until he was arrested for an accidental murder he committed during a robbery. He now works as a garbage collector. His son Cory looks to shape a life for himself when Troy intervenes and potentially sabotages it. The play premiered in 1985 at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center. It won the Pulitzer Prize in 1987 for drama, and a 2010 Broadway revival starring Denzel Washington and Viola Davis was recognized with the Tony Award for Best Revival of a Play, as well as acting awards for both leads. A 2016 film adaptation also featured Washington and Davis.

Two Trains Running (1960s)

This play focuses on the 1960s civil rights movement sweeping across Pittsburgh's Hill District. Not everyone is convinced that this is what the community needs, and this is often the topic of discussion at Memphis' diner, where the play is set, and where the characters in the play feel at home. When the local government, through a city renovation project, and a businessman want to take the diner from Memphis, he must make a decision about what community means during a time of great upheaval. This play premiered in 1990 at Yale Repertory Theatre.

Jitney (1970s)

In the 1970s no taxis will run to Pittsburgh's Hill District, so residents must rely on jitneys, or unlicensed cabs. The story focuses on the lives of the jitney drivers at the station owned by Jim Becker. *Jitney* was written in 1979 and produced at the Allegheny Repertory Theatre in Pittsburgh in 1982. Wilson re-wrote the script in 1996.

King Hedley II (1980s)

One of Wilson's darker plays, it tells the story of an ex-con trying to rebuild his life, focusing on King Hedley II as he tries to make money by selling stolen refrigerators. Throughout, the play examines how the rich seem to get richer and the poorer get poorer. The show premiered in 1999 at Pittsburgh Public Theater, and was a finalist for the 2000 Pulitzer Prize in Drama.

Radio Golf (1990s)

This play focuses on real estate developer Harmond Wilks, who is determined to become the first Black mayor of Pittsburgh and is on a mission to revive his childhood neighborhood. As Wilks confronts his past, he is forced to examine how change can put his neighborhood's history at risk. The production premiered in 2005 at Yale Repertory Theatre.

Ten of Wilson's plays have been featured on Broadway, with numerous Tony Awards and accolades being given to multiple productions. Chicago's Goodman Theatre was the first theater to produce all ten plays in the American Century Cycle, and, here at Trinity Rep, we've produced five of the plays, with Gem of the Ocean being the sixth. We're proud to continue the conversations about the Black experience in America that August Wilson instigated with his remarkable and moving body of work.

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Update from the EDIA Director



By Monique Austin, *Director of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism*

Greetings from the Director of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism at Trinity Rep. We finished 2021 having made great strides in our work, using our Strategic Plan as a guide.

Our first Affinity Space sessions were held on December 15th. In Affinity Spaces, folks with shared backgrounds can discuss what they – and Trinity Rep as a whole – can do to make the theater more inclusive and actively anti-racist. Our groups consisted of staff, members of the acting company, and members of our Board of Trustees. We had a combined total of roughly 40 people in attendance. Our next session was held on January 20th and the final session was held on February 3rd. After these, we will continue to provide time and space to allow these conversations to continue.

In an effort to continue to diversify our

audience, Trinity Rep partnered with Zeta Phi Beta, a historically Black sorority, and hosted "A Finer Night at the Theatre" on December 16th welcoming members of the Kappa Phi Zeta Chapter of the sorority in Providence to see *A Christmas Carol*. We look forward to continuing to partner with other organizations in the coming months.

While the impact of the Omicron variant of COVID-19 has impacted planning, we are pleased to have continue working with Resource Management as well as Community Engagement to plan to bring robust trainings to our community. Upcoming sessions will include: bystander training, unconscious bias, microaggressions, and restorative justice. We are also implementing a new initiative focused on mental health and wellness.

We will continue to offer listening sessions in an effort to collect feedback and input on the needs of our community so that we can provide the training and support that is needed.

For Your Information

- Trinity Repertory Company 201 Washington St., Providence, RI 02903 www.TrinityRep.com info@trinityrep.com
- Ticket Office (401) 351-4242 tickets@trinityrep.com Visit trinityrep.com/ticketoffice for up-to-date hours.
- Subscriber Services (401) 351-4242 tickets@trinityrep.com
- Administrative Offices (401) 521-1100, 9:00 am-5:00 pm, Mon.-Fri.
- Health & Safety: Trinity Rep takes the safety of our patrons, artists, and staff very seriously. Read our current safety protocols at www.trinityrep.com/health.
- Our performances begin on time. Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of house management, and until then will be able to view video monitors in the lobby.
- Emergency Protocol: The theater is protected by emergency lighting and sprinklers. Our house staff
 and security staff are experienced in first aid. In an emergency, please contact an usher or house
 manager.
- Assistive Listening Devices are available for our theaters. Please ask a House Services staff member for assistance.
- Smoking is not permitted inside the building.
- Cameras (including cell phone cameras) and recording devices are not permitted. Please turn all cell
 phones and pagers to silent mode.
- Firearms and weapons are not allowed on the premises. The only persons allowed to carry firearms
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- All bags are subject to search by security if deemed necessary.
- Outside food and beverages are not permitted inside our theaters.
- Group Sales: For discounts, call (401) 453-9238
- Children age five and over are welcome at performances— age two and over for A Christmas Carol. Younger children will not be admitted.
- Gift Cards: The perfect gift! Available in any amount, at the ticket office, at www.TrinityRep.com, or (401) 351-4242.

THE ARTISTIC TEAM

AUGUST WILSON

Playwright

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 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 Playwrighting, 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.

JUDE SANDY*‡, he/him

Director

Jude has been a resident company member since 2016. **Trinity Rep**: Direction for productions of August Wilson's *Radio Golf* and, with Joe

Wilson, Jr., of Marcus Gardley's black odyssey. Choreography for six productions. Scrooge and Christmas Present, A Christmas Carol; Seymour, Little Shop of Horrors; Deus, black odyssey; Othello, Othello; Reggie, Skeleton Crew; Demetrius, A Midsummer Night's Dream; Will Parker, Oklahoma!; Jem, To Kill a Mockingbird; Meridian/Papa D, Blues for Mister Charlie; Asagai, A Raisin in the Sun; Ensemble, Paris by Night. Broadway: War Horse, Lincoln Center Theater. Off-Broadway: The Little Prince; Hit The Wall; At the Table. Regional: Shakespeare Theatre Company; Guthrie Theater; Cleveland Play House; The Williams Project; Bread Loaf Acting Ensemble. **Other**: MFA, Brown/ Trinity Rep; Guthrie Experience for Actors in Training; American Dance Festival; American Dance Legacy Initiative/Dancing Legacy; Yin Mei Dance. Jude is a visiting assistant professor of Theater and Dance at Amherst College, a faculty artist with Middlebury College's Beyond The Page program, and co-founder/co-creator for Denizen Arts, an African diaspora and queer informed dance-theater collaboration with his life partner yaTande Whitney V. Hunter.

TAAVON GAMBLE*‡, he/him Associate Director

Previously at Trinity Rep, Taavon has served as choreographer for the 2019 and 2021 productions of A Christmas Carol. New York: The Color Purple (NY Regional Premiere), Hair at WPPAC, Blood Wedding with Second Skin Productions. Direction/Choreography: Joy (virtual), City Theatre; Pippin, Jean's Playhouse; West Side Story, Spamalot, Chicago, Guys and Dolls, Bigfork Playhouse; Seussical, Pittsburgh Playhouse; A Chorus Line, All Shook Up, Arundel Barn Playhouse; Airness, University California Santa Barbara; Kiss of the Spider Woman, Brown University. Other: Taavon is a teaching artist for Trinity Rep's Young Actor's Summer Institute and teaches dance in the Brown/Trinity Rep MFA program.

www. taavong amble. com

YATANDE WHITNEY V. HUNTER, he/him **Movement & Ritual Direction**

Trinity Rep: Little Shop of Horrors (2019), black odyssey (2019), A Christmas Carol (2017, 2018). Theater: We Are Proud to Present..., Guthrie Theatre; Lives of Great Poisoners, Brown University; The Persian Quarter, Merrimack Repertory Theatre; Finian's Rainbow, Berkshire Theatre Festival; a cautionary tail, NYU Graduate Acting. Choreography: Festival Ballet Providence, RISD Museum, New York SummerStage, Kumble Theater, Movement Research (Judson Church). Education: BFA, Howard University; MFA, Long Island University; Ph.D, Institute for Doctoral Studies in the Visual Arts.

MICHAEL ÉVORA, he/him

Music Director

Previously at Trinity Rep, Michael was the

musical director for *black odyssey*. He is the founder and director of the Prism of Praise Community Gospel Choir, now in its 30th year of music ministry throughout Rhode Island, Connecticut and Southeastern Massachusetts. He is committed to exploring the ability of music not simply to entertain, but to engage, educate, edify and enlighten. Michael is a civil rights attorney and Executive Director of the Rhode Island Commission for Human Rights. He lives in Providence with his husband Sean and two canine dependents, Gage and Tobey.

MICHAEL MCGARTY, he/him

Set Designer

2023 is the beginning of Mr. McGarty's 40th season of association with Trinity. In that time, he has designed upwards of fifty productions. He has designed extensively at regional theatre throughout the United States. Including The Public Theatre, Seattle Rep, The Old Globe, and The Dallas Theatre Center, among others. He has designed on Broadway and the West End of London as well as opera in Europe and America. McGarty is an adjunct professor of design at Rhode Island School of Design.

LEVONNE LINDSAY, she/her

Costume Designer

LeVonne Lindsay is the Costume Shop Manager and Adjunct Assistant Professor at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia. She has a BS in fashion design from Philadelphia University and an MFA in costume design from the University of Maryland, College Park. Academic positions held at Stevenson University, James Madison University, and Valdosta State University. Recipient of the Allen Lee Hughes Fellowship at Arena Stage 2001-2003 and Resident Designer for the African Continuum Theatre in Washington, DC 2002-2004. Recent design credits: Kill, Move, Paradise, Wilma Theater; The Garbologists, Sweat, Philadelphia Theatre Company; Ragtime, Gem of the Ocean, The Bluest Eye, Arden Theater Company; A Hard Time, Pig Iron Theater; White, Theater Horizon; Time Is On Our Side, Simpatico Theater; Native Gardens, The Hampton Years, Virginia Stage Company.

ALEJANDRO FAJARDO, he/him

Lighting Designer

Alejandro Fajardo is a Colombian lighting designer based in Lenapehoking (Brooklyn). Alejandro strongly believes that art and imagination can help guide our communities through the current crises we face and build a new future that centers community care and growth. His recent theatrical credits include NYC Free: a month-long performance festival at Little Island Park, Murmur (Kafka Collective), The Bengson's Broken Ear Setlist: Songs from OHIO (St. Ann's Warehouse), /wē/ and fôr (Michiyaya Dance), Cherie Dre (Danspace Projects), and more. Alejandro has designed two

escape rooms at Big Sky Resort in Montana, as well as a series of theatrical immersive games at the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center (Big Sky, MT). Alejandro has designed the site lighting for music festivals (Electric Forest, Okeechobee Music and Arts Festival, Life is Beautiful) and many New York Fashion Week shows with Rob Ross Design; he is one of the associate Lighting Directors for Fall for Dance Festival at New York City Center. See more of his work at www.fajardodesigns.com

BROKEN CHORD

Original Music & Sound Designers

Trinity Rep: Steel Magnolias, A Lie of the Mind, Crime and Punishment, The Glass Menagerie, The Melancholy Play, King Lear, Pride and Prejudice. Broadway: The Parisian Woman, Eclipsed. Off-Broadway: The Lying Lesson, Atlantic Theater; OZET, IAP; Bull in a China Shop, LCT3; When We Were Young and Unafraid, MTC; Informed Consent, Primary Stages; The Good Negro, Party People, Public Theater; Dance and the Railroad, Signature. Regional: Ruined, Berkeley Rep; Fairfield, Cleveland Play House; The Great Society, Dallas Theater Center; Enemy of the People, As You Like It, Guthrie Theater; Make Believe, Hartford Stage; Top Girls, Huntington Theatre; UniSon, OSF; Hamlet, Macbeth, Shakespeare Theatre; These Paper Bullets!, Yale Rep. Film: Fall to Rise. brokenchord.us

ALEC E. FERRELL*, he/him Production Stage Manager

Alec E. Ferrell is a Philadelphia-based Stage Manager. Regional Credits: My General Tubman (World Premiere), Indecent, Gem of the Ocean, Once, Fun Home, Gypsy, Parade, The Secret Garden, My Name is Asher Lev (World Premiere) at Arden Theatre Company. Other Regional Credits: Adirondack Theatre Festival 2021, Phoenix Theatre Company, Theatre Horizon; PlayPenn New Play Development; Eugene O'Neill Theater Center; PTC@Play. International: [untitled project] #213 (Edinburgh Festival Fringe). Proud Member of AEA, SMA. Love and thanks to the family.

AMANDA KOSACK*, she/her Assistant Stage Manager

Amanda is excited to make her Trinity Rep debut! **National Tours:** School of Rock the Musical, Irving Berlin's White Christmas, Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story, Fela! **Off-Broadway:** Medea (Brooklyn Academy of Music); The Swimmer, Tom Morello at the Minetta Lane, Margaret Trudeau: Certain Woman of An Age (Audible Theater); Long Lost, Cost of Living (Manhattan Theatre Club); Wakey Wakey, Old Hats, Medieval Play, The Lady From Dubuque (Signature Theatre); All The Ways To Say I Love You (MCC); Cloud Nine (Atlantic Theater Company); The Way We Get By (Second Stage). **Regional:** Long Wharf Theatre, Surflight Theatre, Lyric

Theatre of Oklahoma. Oklahoma City University graduate. Love and thanks to Mom, Dad $\bar{\&}$ Jared.

ADDITIONAL STAFF

Asst. Scenic Designer......Shanel LaShay Smith Production Assistant......Shoshana Adler Production Assistant......Polly Feliciano

THE CAST

MAURO HANTMAN* ‡, he/him Rutherford Selig



Trinity Rep: Mauro has been a member of Trinity Rep's resident acting company since 1999. Highlights include: Macbeth, Macbeth; Jack Burden, All the King's Men; Cyrano, Cyrano de Bergerac; Hotspur, Henry IV; Peter Pan, Peter Pan; Dill, To

Kill a Mockingbird; Oberon, A Midsummer Night's Dream; Scoop, The Heidi Chronicles; John Dodge, Middletown; Steve, Clyborne Park; Mr. Marx, Intimate Apparel; Hal, Proof; Rooster Hannigan, Annie; George Bailey, It's a Wonderful Life; Wally, The Cider House Rules; Frank, Appropriate; Phil, Faithful Cheaters; Roderigo, Othello. Other Theaters: Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Wallis Annenberg Center, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Gamm Theatre, The Rhode Island Shakespeare Theater. Other: Mauro has an MFA from the Trinity Rep Conservatory. He was also a 2018 Lunt-Fontanne Fellow.

CHRISTOPHER LINDSAY, he/him *Citizen Barlow*



Trinity Rep: Marley/Topper (u/s), A Christmas Carol. Brown/Trinity Rep: Prospero, The Tempest, Nick, Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? Regional: Ferdinand, The Tempest, Stokely Carmichael, The Parchman Hour, Fred, A Christmas Carol,

Virginia Stage Company, Asagai, *A Raisin in the Sun*, Cloverdale Playhouse. **Other:** Christopher is a fourth-year actor in the Brown/Trinity Rep MFA program. He holds a BA from Norfolk State University in English/Theater where he is also a charter member of the Alpha Theta Kappa Chapter of Alpha Psi Omega National Theatre Honor Society. Additionally, he is a recipient of the 2021 KCACTF Rosa Parks Playwrighting Award, the 2021 KCACTF Lorraine Hansberry Playwrighting Award, & the 2016 KCACTF Most Distinguished Actor in a Play Award.

LIZ MORGAN*, she/her Black Mary



Trinity Rep: Gabriella, Boeing-Boeing; Eva (u/s), Absurd Person Singular Brown/Trinity Rep: Venus, Venus; Countess, All's Well that Ends Well; Queen Margaret, Richard Ill; Vee Talboot, Orpheus Descending; First Witch,

Macbeth; Romance, Mo'Reece and the Girls. Other Theaters: Camae, The Mountaintop, Capital Rep; Camae, The Mountaintop, Perseverance Theatre; Vicky, Bright Half Life, Company of Fools; Ensemble, Othello, Harlem Shakespeare Festival; Mouse, whatdoesfreemean?, Nora's Playhouse; The Hunchback of Seville, Principal Principle, Chicken Grease is Nasty Business!, Playwrights Rep; He is Here He Says I Say, Na Luta, Inkblots, Rites & Reason Theatre. Film: Ted 2 Other: A proud graduate of Brown/Trinity Rep; Director of Training & Pedagogy at Theatre of the Oppressed NYC; Co-Founder of The Fled Collective; 2021 TCG's Rising Leaders of Color.

www.LizMorganOnline.com

RICARDO PITTS-WILEY*, he/him **Solly Two-Kings**



Ricardo is an actor, playwright, composer, and director. **Trinity Rep**: He began his professional career at Trinity Rep in 1974 and appeared in *Brother to Dragons, A Christmas Carol, Tom Jones, Jumpers, The*

Little Foxes, Another Part of the Forest, Uncle Tom's Cabin, The Good Times Are Killing Me, Boesman and Lena, King Lear, Macbeth, Jonestown Express, Ma Rainey's Black Bottom, Fences, The Piano Lesson, "Master Harold"... and the boys, The Cider House Rules, and August Wilson's Radio Golf. Other: He co-founded Mixed Magic Theatre with his wife Bernadet V. Pitts-Wiley in 2000 and was a 2017 Pell Award recipient. He is the author and lyricist for the musicals Celebrations: An African Odyssey; Waiting for Bessie Smith; Trains and Dreams; A Kwanzaa Song; Sara's Jukebox; Night's People;

Man, Woman, Chaos; and The Well of Woman. As a playwright he has written the dramas Fate Comes Knocking, The Trial of Frederick Douglas, The Baghdad, Romeo & Juliet, 35 Mlles from Detroit, and Reflections: Growing Up a Black Man in America, as well as page-to-stage adaptations of Moby Dick, Frankenstein, Don Quixote, The Red Tent, and Sweat and The Gilded Six-Bits by Zora Neale Hurston. Some of the universities where he has taught theater include MIT, URI, and RIC.

DEREKS THOMAS*, he/him **Eli**



Trinity Rep: Radio Golf.
Off-Broadway: Ghost
Stories: The Shawl & Prairie
Du Chien, Atlantic Theater
Company. Regional:
Passing Strange, Studio
Theatre; The Lily's Revenge,
The Light Princess, The
Donkey Show, American

Repertory Theater (A.R.T.). **International**: The Imaginary Invalid, Moscow Art Theatre (MXAT). **Television**: *Prodigal Son* (FOX). **Education**: MFA, A.R.T./MXAT Theater Institute at Harvard. BS, The Citadel: **www.dereksthomas.com**

ROSE WEAVER*, she/her Aunt Ester Tyler



This is Rose Weaver's 49th year as an actor, singer, and playwright. **Trinity Rep:** She began her career at Trinity Rep in 1973 as an Acting Fellow. Rose appeared as Billie Holiday in *Lady Day at Emerson's*

Bar & Grille, Dussie Mae in Ma Rainey's Black

in Into the Woods, The Good Times Are Killing Me, The Waiting Room, Another Part of the Forest, Measure for Measure, Side by Side by Sondheim, Brother to Dragons, Uncle Tom's Cabin, Aimee, A Christmas Carol, Jonestown Express, Tintypes, Two Gentlemen of Verona, The Boys from Syracuse, School for Scandal, and From the Mississippi Delta. Other Theatres: Los Angeles / The Mark Taper, The Walnut Street Theatre, Old Globe San Diego, Arkansas Rep, National Theatre Company. Film/ **Television:** In the Heat of the Night, Poetic Justice, LA Law, Tales From the Crypt, The Accused, Not In My Family, Lady in White, Go Tell It On the Mountain. Other: Original Plays include Menopause Mama, Skips in the Record, Black Women Taking Off the Masks. Teaching: Wheaton College, RI College, Moses Brown School. Awards: The Pell Award for Excellence in the Arts 2000, R. I. Heritage Harbor Hall of Fame, Rhode Island State Council on the Arts Fellowships in Playwriting, Lucille Lortel Playwriting Award, GoLocal Providence's R.I. Woman of the Year, Rhode Island Foundation Fellowships and New Works Awards, Business Volunteers in the Arts/RI Achievement in the Arts, YWCA Woman of the Year Awards in Arts, and The RI Historical Society History Maker Award. Rose is the author and actress of the one woman play, Menopause Mama and the new play, Black Women Taking Off the Masks. Rose is published in Monologues for Women by Women, Heinemann,

and NuMuse: An Anthology of Plays from Brown

University. She received her Bachelor of Arts

degree from Wheaton College (Massachusetts),

a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing from

Brown University at the age of 50, and holds

three Honorary Doctor of Fine Arts Degrees

from Wheaton College, Marymount Manhattan

College, and Providence College. Excited to be

back on stage at Trinity with a fine cast and superb

Bottom, Bernice in The Piano Lesson, The Witch

JOE WILSON, JR.* ‡, he/him Caesar Wilks



Trinity Rep: In 17 seasons as a company member, plays include: August Wilson's Radio Golf, The Prince of Providence, Marisol, The Song of Summer, black odyssey (co-director and the role

of Ulysses), The Mountaintop, Oklahoma! (IRNE Award), Julius Caesar, Intimate Apparel, The Grapes of Wrath, Clybourne Park, Camelot, Yellowman, Cabaret, A Raisin in the Sun, A Christmas Carol (director in 2021), All The King's Men, The Fantasticks, Cherry Orchard, Topdog/Underdog (IRNE Award), Ain't Misbehavin' (IRNE Award), Hamlet. Broadway: Iceman Cometh (2018) Tony-Nominated Best Revival) starring Denzel Washington, Jesus Christ Superstar (2000 Tony Nominated Best Revival). Off-Broadway: Little Ham and Josephine's Song. Regional: Huntington, Penumbra, North Shore Music Theatre, Alliance, McCarter, Syracuse Stage, Guthrie, Ordway Music Theatre, Children's Theatre Company, New Rep, and American Players. Other: MFA, Univ. of Minnesota/Guthrie; BA, Notre Dame. Joe and Trinity Rep participated in the Fox Foundation Resident Actor Fellowships, funded by the William & Eva Fox Foundation and administered by Theatre Communications Group. He is on the board of the Manton Avenue Project in Providence, RI. He was inducted into the MLK Hall of Fame at Providence City Hall, and was the Medgar Evers Award winner with the Providence NAACP.

- * Denotes member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers.
- **‡** Trinity Rep Resident Acting Company member

This theater operates under agreements with the League of Resident Theatres, Actors' Equity Association (the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States), the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, and United Scenic Artists. Trinity Rep is a constituent of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for non-profit theater; an Associate Member of the National New Play Network; and a Public Works Affiliate.





director, Jude Sandy!









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Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

LEADERSHIP FOR TRINITY REP

CURT COLUMBUS, he/him/her
The Arthur P. Solomon and Sally E. Lapides
Artistic Director



Curt Columbus became Trinity Repertory Company's fifth artistic director in January 2006. He is also the artistic director of the Brown/Trinity Rep MFA programs in Acting and Directing. His directing credits for Trinity include Macbeth, Ragtime, Beowulf:

A Thousand Years of Baggage, Middletown, Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike, The Merchant of Venice, His Girl Friday, Camelot, Cabaret, Blithe Spirit, A Christmas Carol, Cherry Orchard, and the world premieres of *The Completely Fictional—Utterly* True—Final Strange Tale of Edgar Allen Poe and Social Creatures. Trinity Rep has been home to the world premieres of three of his plays, Paris by Night, The Dreams of Antigone, and Sparrow Grass, and produced his translations of Chekhov's Cherry Orchard and Ivanov, as well as Feydeau's A Flea in Her Ear and Lope de Vega's Like Sheep to Water (Fuente Ovejuna). Curt's adaptation of Dostoevsky's Crime and Punishment (with Marilyn Campbell) has won awards and accolades around the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia. His translation of Chekhov's Three Sisters, developed at the Arden

Theatre in Philadelphia, is published by Dramatists Play Service, as is *Sparrow Grass* and his translations of Chekhov's *Seagull, Uncle Vanya, Cherry Orchard*, and *Ivanov*. Curt lives in Providence, Rhode Island with his husband, Nate Watson.

JENNIFER CANOLE, she/her Interim Executive Director and Director of Development



Jen has worked in development and external relations at Trinity Rep since 1999 and has been director of development since 2016. She was appointed to serve as interim executive director in October, as the theater engages in a national search for its next administrative

leader. Over Jen's 22 years with the theater, she secured the seed money that launched Trinity Rep's Young Actors Studio (after-school and summer programs), Project Discovery Plus (in-school residencies supporting student matinee attendance), Trinity Rep Active Imagination Network (programs for children and adults with autism, cognitive, and psychiatric disabilities), and Open Access Theater; served on the board of Rhode Island Citizens for the Arts; worked on multiple capital campaigns and dozens of special events; and has raised millions of dollars for the theater's operations, facilities, programs, and endowment. She was

recognized for her work with a Providence Business News 40 Under Forty Award in 2013. Jen is a graduate of Ithaca College, and lives in Lincoln, Rhode Island with her husband and two sons.



Audience Agreement

Welcome to Trinity Rep. This is YOUR home for dramatic discoveries.

Our mission is to "reinvent the public square" and create a forum for diverse communities to engage in dialogue. We produce plays, community events, and educational opportunities – but without an audience they have no effect, and they are far less impactful and meaningful if they aren't shared by a diverse audience that represents our entire community. So, whether you consider yourself a "theater person" or not, **you are welcome here**. Whether you're wearing jeans and a t-shirt or dressed to the nines, **you are welcome here**. Whether this is your first show or hundredth, **you are welcome here**. At Trinity Rep, you are welcome whatever your background or history, however you look or identify. We ask only that everyone join us in committing to these community agreements:

Respect for each other is essential. Language or actions rooted in hate, whether intentional or not, have no place at Trinity Rep. We do not tolerate racism, discrimination, or harassment of any kind, including microaggressions.

Recognize that this organization belongs to all members of the community.

Trinity Rep welcomes everyone and hopes that our patrons will welcome one another with the same enthusiasm and respect.

All respectful responses to the artists and their work on stage are encouraged,

including but certainly not limited to: laughter, applause, tears, snaps, and verbal encouragement.

Refrain from participating in unwelcome contact with artists, staff, and patrons including physical contact and remarks about appearance, ability, or identity.

If you have any comments or concerns, or have not felt welcome at Trinity Rep, please let us know by speaking to our staff at the theater, contacting us by phone at (401) 259-0700, email feedback@trinityrep.com, or complete the form at www.trinityrep.com/feedback. Your name and contact information are not required, but if you would like us to follow up with you, we will need to know how to reach you.

August Wilson at Trinity Rep

1987-88 Season: Ma Rainey's Black Bottom

In the 1987-1988 Season, Trinity Rep produced its very first August Wilson play, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*. Longtime resident company member Barbara Meek played the titular character in a show that featured both Ricardo Pitts-Wiley and Rose Weaver, who are both in *Gem of the Ocean*.

Did you know? Ma Rainey's Black Bottom is the only August Wilson show not set in the Hill District of Pittsburgh. This makes it a bit of an anomaly since it lacks connections to the Cycle's other characters and locations, but it still centers on the Black American experience.



From left: David Kennett, Howard London, Barbara Meek, and Rose Weaver in *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*. Directed by William Partlan, sets by Robert D. Soule, costumes by William Lane, lights by John F. Custer. Photo by Mark Morelli.

1988-89 Season: Joe Turner's Come and Gone

Barbara Meek appeared in a Wilson play for the second year in a row with Joe Turner's Come and Gone alongside one of the larger casts for an August Wilson play at Trinity Rep. One of these cast members was Viola Davis, who would go on to win an Emmy, Oscar, and Tony Award. Several of Viola's accolades come from her performances in adaptations of August Wilson: she earned her Academy Award for Best Actress for her role in the film version of Fences, and she won Tonys for both Fences and King Hedley II on Broadway.

Did you know? The character Rutherford Selig appears in both this play and Gem of the Ocean. In Joe Turner at Trinity Rep, he was played by David Kennet, while in Gem he's portrayed by Mauro Hantman.



Viola Davis and Barbara Meek in Joe Turner's Come and Gone. Directed by Israel Hicks, sets by Robert D. Soule, costumes by William Lane, lights by Michael Giannitti. Photo by Mark Morelli.

1991-92 Season: Fences

Fences may be Wilson's most well-known and acclaimed play. The high stakes personal drama makes it a treat for actors to bring to life, as performers like Gustave Johnson, Ricardo Pitts-Wiley, and Barbara Meek did.

Did you know? Fences was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1987, becoming August Wilson's first play to do so. Just three years later in 1990, *The Piano Lesson* would also take home the prize.



Gustave Johnson, Ricardo Pitts-Wiley, and Barbara Meek in Fences. Directed by Clinton Turner Davis, sets by Robert D. Soule, costumes by William Lane, lights by Michael Giannitti. Photo by Mark Morelli.

2000-01 Season: The Piano Lesson

The Piano Lesson was the last time that Rose Weaver and Ricardo Pitts-Wiley were on stage at Trinity Rep together – at least before Gem of the Ocean. The fourth play in the cycle is set at the height of the Great Depression.

Did you know? The Piano Lesson is the next August Wilson play slated for the silver screen. Netflix is set to release a movie adaptation starring Samuel L. Jackson and John David Washington.



Robert Jason Jackson and Keskhemnu in *The Piano Lesson*. Directed by Edris Cooper-Anifowoshe, sets by Michael McGarty, costumes by Andre Harrington, lights by Yael Lubetsky. Photo by T. Charles Erickson.

2019-20 Season: Radio Golf

Two years ago, resident company member Jude Sandy directed the final play in the American Century Cycle, *Radio Golf*, in the Dowling Theater. Trinity Rep veteran Ricardo Pitts-Wiley returned to the Trinity Rep stage for the first time in 20 years with this show. He, Jude, Dereks Thomas, and Joe Wilson, Jr. are all reuniting for *Radio Golf*.

Did you know? Joe's character in *Radio Golf*, Harmond Wilks, is the grandson of his character in *Gem of the Ocean*, Caesar Wilks (Talk about family resemblance!). Ricardo's *Radio Golf* character Joseph Barlow is also the child of Citizen Barlow (Christopher Lindsay) and Black Mary (Liz Morgan) in *Gem*.



Ricardo Pitts-Wiley (foreground) with Joe Wilson, Jr. In *Radio Golf.* Directed by Jude Sandy, sets by Michael McGarty and Baron E. Pugh, costumes by Yao Chen, lighting by Amith Chandrashaker. Photo by Mark Turek.

A Lasting Cycle

A reflection on the enduring relevancy of August Wilson's works

By Michelle Cruz, Director of Community Engagement

The last time I anticipated sitting in a Trinity Rep seat to witness August Wilson's work was in February 2020, which seems a lifetime ago. I was watching audiences stream in and out of performances of August Wilson's Radio Golf, hosting a talkback and conversations with community members and Black-led organizations, and finally celebrating a culminating Sunday Dinner with the community at the production's closing on March 5th. During the run of Radio Golf, many in the Black community saw themselves represented on stage in a way that resonated with so many of us. We saw bits of ourselves in those characters, grappling with what cost we lay bare to make it in this world, and at what cost. We asked: What are we losing from our past? What ancestral traditions have we lost, either through others' intentional erasure or our own families' memory loss, and what do we hold onto tightly, especially in times of great despair of grief, trauma, the pain of racism, or when we are able, times of Black joy?

The connections between Radio Golf and Gem of the Ocean are quite evident in the paths of these characters, in the shadow of our ancestors and themes of the remnants of slavery, racism, injustice, mass incarceration, scrupulous tactics of discrimination generation after generation. How much has changed for Black America from the beginning of the 1900s through the end of the American Century Cycle?

"The goal was to get them down on paper," August Wilson told The Associated Press during an April 2005 interview as he was completing *Radio Golf*, the last play in the cycle. "It was fortunate when I looked up and found I had the two bookends to go. I didn't plan it that way. I was able to connect the two plays." Wilson was referring to *Gem of the Ocean*, chronologically the first play in the cycle, although the ninth to be written. It takes place in 1904 and is set in Pittsburgh's Hill District at 1839 Wylie Avenue, a specific address that figures prominently, nearly 100 years later, in the last work, *Radio Golf*, which premiered in April (2005) at the Yale Repertory Theatre. To me, 1839

Wylie Avenue holds our ancestral anguish, as if it was another border walking through the doors, enveloping us in our modern-day life.

Civil Rights activist, author, and founding member of NAACP W.E.B. DuBois spoke to the notion of developing Black Theater that was "by us, for us, near us, and about us." Years later, August Wilson reminds of us the connections of Black theater and its origins on the slave plantations of the South. In his speech, *The Ground on Which I Stand*, Wilson saw Black theater either as forced entertainment for the slaveowner and guests or the reflection of slave's own tradition of the arts for spiritual survival, investing in the spirit of their ancestors. Our ancestral lineage and traditions call to us to this day, as we grapple with how far we still need to go.

As we enter the space that is 1839 Wylie Avenue in *Gem of the Ocean*, I reflect on when DuBois declared that during the Black Reconstruction: "The slave went free; stood a brief moment in the sun; then moved back again toward slavery." August Wilson often stated that Black Americans would have been better suited to stay in the South. Time and time again, we are faced with this question with the characters in his 100-year span of storytelling in his Hill District in Pittsburgh; some of whom we get to see grow older and we meet future generations of their family. We wonder, as time passes, are these characters truly faring better? Was The Great Migration that great? The utter terrorism that followed after Reconstruction in the South was so deep, with folks like Citizen Barlow in *Gem of the Ocean* trying to escape. We have seen the chains of slavery break into the links of prison camps (some in operation to this day), The injustices throughout decades in the workforce and the dangling carrot of The Great Migration has failed us in many ways. A dream deferred...

In *Gem of the Ocean*, Aunt Ester is the matriarch and the holder of "blood memory". She holds the memory of slavery and what is to also come to our people. We hold onto our ancestors and try to speak to them whenever we can, many times at times of utter hopelessness and fear. George Floyd calling out to his mother during his last breaths was something that hit so many. Deeply, a sacred calling to an ancestor at one of the most horrific times in our modern history. Aunt Ester speaks to the water, the land, and the City of Bones to Citizen Barlow, a deep reflection of our people, in the Middle Passage of slavery and the flurry of pain that remains with us still...." In time, it will all come to light."

Save The Date

The shows in our 2022-23
Season will be announced
this spring! Check our social
media to learn more!

Northern Aggression

By Jack Brook

A Brown symposium looks at the key role Rhode Island—and all of New England—played in the slave trade.

This piece was original published in the Brown University Alumni Magazine.

"New England is up to its ears in slave-grown cotton" says associate professor of history Seth Rockman, whose work examines slavery's central role in the development of global and American capitalism. We talk about New England as a free economy, which Rockman says is "obviously misleading. Yet we don't have a way of talking about New England as an outpost of a slave economy."

To start finding the words, staff and professors at the History Department, Watson Institute, and Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion partnered with organizations including the Rhode Island Council of Humanities to host a three-day symposium, "Slavery's Hinterlands: Capitalism and Bondage in Rhode Island and Across the Atlantic World." The May event dispensed with the air-brushed version of Rhode Island history that obscures the connections the state—and the region—had with the slave trade.

In Rhode Island, textile factory Slater Mill is often celebrated as the birthplace of the American industrial revolution. But it was also a crucial part of the slave economy. Built in 1793, the mill relied on the labor of women and children to manufacture textiles out of raw cotton from the South. That cotton was

picked by enslaved people—and Northern mills like Slater produced materials such as "negro cloth," used to clothe the enslaved population.

"People are consistently surprised at this history, that Rhode Island had anything to do with the slave trade," says Joey DeFrancesco, a public historian and Slater Mill tour guide. "Yet there was a close relationship between early industrial capitalism and mass enslavement in the United States."

BROWN'S ROLE

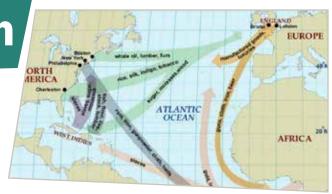
On a chilly Saturday, C. Morgan Grefe '00 AM, '05 PhD, led a group of visitors through the John Brown

House museum, outlining the Brown family's involvement in the slave trade. Brown, with his brothers Nicholas, Joseph, and Moses, helped found the University and donated the land on which it now stands, at which point the school took on the Brown name. John Brown served as the University's treasurer from 1775 to 1796.

"John Brown was an ardent defender of the slave trade," said Grefe, executive director of the Rhode Island Historical Society. "And that aspect of capitalism is very much embedded in the material culture of this house, in the walls, in the mahogany, in the decorative arts here."

"Slavery was a core feature of the normal political and economic life of the United States rather than some outlier that was contradictory to our founding values."

She pointed out a beautiful blue porcelain bowl, depicting a looming fortified castle where Africans were imprisoned before they could be sold to European and American traders, as an example of the normalization of the slave trade in everyday life.



Grefe explained how, in 1764, John and his three brothers funded and outfitted a slave ship, the Sally, to bring back Africans—one of over 900 slaving voyages embarking from Rhode Island, collectively responsible for importing over 100,000 Africans to the Americas, where they were offered for sale as enslaved laborers. The Sally represented a particularly brutal example: of the 196 Africans on board, at least 109 died over the course of the voyage.

Though John Brown's brother, Moses, later became a prominent abolitionist, he was also the main financier behind Slater Mill, and thus continued to profit from enslaved labor.

LIVING HISTORY

"If we understand that the

histories of capitalism,

slavery, and empire are

one and the same," Denvir

says, "then we are much

better equipped now to

make a politics that fights

them all simultaneously."

Outside the museum, Elon Cook-Lee '14 AM, program director and curator for the Center for Reconciliation (CFR), gathered a tour group at the intersection of Power and Brown streets. After graduating with a master's in Public Humanities, Cook-Lee became a founding staff member of the

CFR, which facilitates dialogues around racism, race, and slavery to educate and move individuals and groups toward active engagement in anti-racism work.

"I want you all to be thinking of these streets as metaphors," said Cook-Lee, wearing a jacket emblazoned "Museums are Not Neutral."

Further down, Power joins Benefit Street. Think about how power accumulated capital through the slave trade, Cook-Lee urged, and how that power and capital remain embedded in our society today.

Another tour, led by Marco McWilliams, Swearer Center Program Coordinator at Times2 STEM Academy, Black Studies Scholar, and founding instructor of the community-based Black Studies FREEdom School, focused on black history on College Hill into the 20th century and the repercussions of slavery. Beginning at the historically African American Olney Street Baptist Church, McWilliams looked at "what kind of agency black folks living right here in Providence took up to create lives amongst themselves to resist slavery."

At one stop, for instance, McWilliams discussed black student activism at nearby Hope High School in the late 1960s to improve public education—an important part of understanding the afterlife of slavery in the structural racism of New England and the rest of the United States, which became "naturalized," he says—so much a part of our culture that it's not questioned by the mainstream.

REFRAMING CAPITALISM

The symposium also sought to get rid of the "fairy tale" of capitalism, by shifting the perception that the violence and exploitation of slavery were merely aberrations in the United States economy, says Daniel Denvir, a

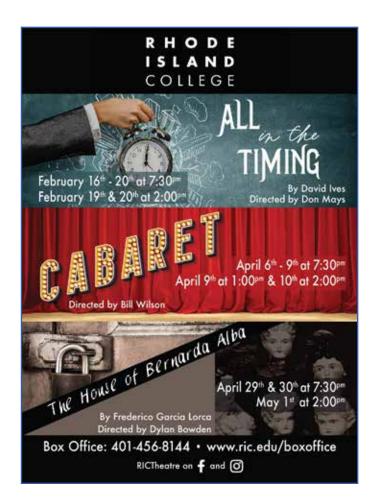
visiting fellow at the Watson Institute who helped organize the event.

Denvir facilitated a series of discussions for the Jacobin magazine podcast "The Dig," publicly interviewing Brown professors and public historians to illuminate the complex systems of oppression that enabled American chattel slavery to persist.

"When we actually understand how slavery, along with indigenous dispossession and genocide, was a core feature of the normal political and economic life of the United States rather than some outlier that was contradictory to our founding values," Denvir says, "we see that in fact we had one system of racial capitalism in this country and that the South and the North each played key, indispensable roles in this system."

In linking the exploitation of poor white labor in Northern factories like Slater Mill with mass enslavement in the South, Denvir argues that a more fruitful resistance to contemporary racism and economic inequality can emerge, one that bridges the divide between people of color and the working-class whites. Slater Mill also illustrates how laborers have consistently reacted against their exploitation, he says. In 1824, one hundred young female mill workers organized America's first factory strike, successfully forcing concessions from the mill's owners. For Denvir, these forms of activism should not be considered historically separate from resistance to Southern slavery.

"If we understand that the histories of capitalism, slavery, and empire are one and the same," Denvir says, "then we are much better equipped now to make a politics that fights them all simultaneously."



The View from the Hill

By Joi Wright, Education Programs Coordinator

The Hill District of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania attracts people from all over the world for its art, culture, history, and attractions — one being the home of playwright August Wilson.

Wilson was born and raised in the present Crawford-Roberts neighborhood, known as the lower Hill District before the 20th century. Even though the playwright and his family moved out of the Hill District by the time he turned 13, he still considered it home. In later years Wilson paid homage to his home by setting nine of the ten plays in his *American Century Cycle* there.

A collection of historically African-American neighborhoods, the Hill District was made up of three areas: lower, middle, and upper. Early in the 19th century, the neighbor-hood contained country estates, working farms, coal mines, and a village of Black freedmen. By 1929 the Hill District was populated by many ethnic groups and was divided into areas that reflected the ethnic makeup of that neighbor-hood. Some of these areas were called Little Italy, Polish Hill, Athens, Little Syria, Jewish "Ghetto," and the Black Belt.

The city's first Black district was once a center of arts and culture, with a strong sense of community. During the 20th century, the older ethnic and Jewish populations moved away, and the Hill District became known as the Harlem of

Pittsburgh, a place where the best jazz could be heard. It was known by many names: Little Harlem, Little Haiti, and "the crossroads of the world." After the demolition of the lower Hill in the name of urban renewal in the 1950s, the District was then divided into five census tracts: Crawford Roberts, Bedford Dwellings, Middle Hill, Upper Hill, and Terrace Village.

Currently, there is a growing feeling that the neighborhood is on the cusp of resurgence, thanks to the relentless work of a web of community-focused residents, nonprofit organizations, churches, and foundations. The August Wilson House is slated to be the site of a multidisciplinary arts center, with an artist-in-residency program.

Over its very long history, the Hill District has ranged from vibrant to distressed. Existing almost as long as the city itself, this area has undergone many transformations that have made it the place it is today. While enduring the changes brought by migration, industrialization, urban renewal, and de-industrialization, the number and composition of the residents have changed, but the neighborhood itself has survived. Unlike some past efforts, though, the present renewal is no top-down overhaul — today the community has a powerful seat at the table and is using it.



Directing Sueño with

Tatyana-Marie Carlo

Sueño, José Rivera's adaptation of La Vida es Sueño (Life is a Dream) by Pedro Calderón de la Barca comes to Trinity Rep this spring. A comedic adventure tale set in the Spanish Golden Age, Sueño follows Segismundo, a prince imprisoned from birth due to an ominous prophecy. When given a chance at freedom, his actions could either earn him the throne or return him to a lifetime of isolation to question the very nature of reality and humanity.

Director Tatyana-Marie Carlo spoke with Communications Associate Laura Weick about the show.

Laura Weick: In your own words, what is this show about?

Tatyana-Marie Carlo: Sueño is about breaking expectations, and the challenges that come with unresolved trauma, and the life we are "meant" to lead in the eyes of the people who love us the most. Segismundo is brought into the world without a fighting chance: Before his birth, the stars tell Basilio that Segismundo will be a "cruel, tyrannical, and outrageous prince". And when he's given a chance to prove that he isn't, we question whether he was predestined to be evil or if his circumstances made him evil, nature vs nurture. The metaphors about Segismundo's doomed future were "written in the stars" before he could chart his own course for his life. The play reflects the need for the characters to snap generational traumas and the expectations placed on those before they can make their own decisions.

LW: Tell us a bit about your vision for this production.

TMC: My pitch to [Artistic Director] Curt Columbus was to envision the play as a live telenovela set. This play and the original Spanish Golden Age text called for melodrama and heightened emotions and physicality which is a great pairing for a telenovela theme. It'll be a sort of play within a play, where you can see the "director" of the telenovela, we'll see the cameras, the audience gets to be in on the action and watch the play being filmed in real time.

LW: Why were you interested in directing this show?

TMC: So much of the work I already do is what I like to call "(tr)adaptations" of classical texts; translations and adaptations. I've worked with Teatro en El Verano, the Trinity Rep/Rhode Island Latino Arts partnership that produces free, touring, bilingual theater throughout Rhode Island, focusing on modernizing classic works like Shakespeare for current audiences. In that tradition, Sueño is an adaptation of a Spanish Golden Age play, and José Rivera wrote it in the 90s. I love doing these kinds of plays, especially with a playwright I really admire. This is the third José Rivera play that I've worked on, and his works always excite me. Both Rivera and I are Puerto Rican, and growing up, I heard about his work. There wasn't anybody else that I connected to on a language level, as I understood him a lot more than his white contemporaries. There's that poetic language in him, especially with this play being based on Life is a Dream. Yet, his plays reflect how people actually talk to each other, not always formal but more authentic. I met him as a student at Brown/Trinity Rep, and I had such a great experience! José Rivera is a pillar in the Latinx community, so I feel so incredibly fortunate to be working on another one of his plays.

LW: The last time we saw you at Trinity Rep, you directed Fade while still a student at Brown/Trinity Rep when the original director stepped down days before first rehearsal. And you directed your MFA thesis project, *References to Salvador Dalí Make Me Hot*, which was also by José Rivera. How is *Sueño* different from the other work you have done?

TMC: Both of those shows were written as, what I'll call, "off the top of the dome;" They were original stories. *Sueño* is an adaptation of a much older work, so I feel like I have more of an understanding going in. I just worked on *Life is a Dream* at State University of New York – Purchase, so I have more context of where the adaptation is coming from. The original *Life is a Dream* and *Sueño* are very different tonally and as shows, of course, but they have the same characters and the same arcs.

LW: The show's cast includes Anne Scurria, one



of our longest consecutively serving company members, and Daniel Duque-Estrada, who worked with you on *Fade*. We'll also see performers like Rudy Cabrera, Catia, and Alfredo Antillon who've worked with you at Teatro en El Verano.

TMC: I think pairing varying levels of experience keeps everybody on their toes and excited to learn from each other. The person I'm most excited about working with is Annie because I think that she's gonna make us all better, every single one of us. That's a lot of pressure for me, but I will tell her that! I stand to learn something from someone who has done as many plays as Annie Scurria, as well as the other more homegrown performers. Community members like Rudy [Cabrera] and Catia shine every time they are on stage because they manage to always maintain their Dominican and Rhode Island authenticity. They are examples of why I love Rhode Island. I would love to see more people who were born and raised in Rhode Island on Trinity stages, especially people of color and the Latinx community. If you look at our stages, the amount of Latinx people from Rhode Island that are on stage are few and far between. The MFA students (Alfredo Antillon, Andrew Gombas, and Jihan Haddad), we get to sort of launch them out into their professional careers and they are so ready to take the American theater by storm.

LW: What about this show – especially in its themes – do you think will resonate with modern audiences?

TMC: This play is full of so many themes. I mentioned before the idea of pre-destiny vs free-will that consumes Segismundo's life. There is another critical theme, the harm of a solely patriarchal society. Rosaura, Catia's character, is told she can't do anything because she's a woman.

This play is set in a time where men controlled all the political and legal processes. Even now, women still struggle to challenge societal structures that hold them back. And even with the casting of this show, we are interrogating and combating against these norms. For example, Annie Scuria plays the role of Basilio, which has historically been played by men.

LW: What are you most looking forward to for directing this show?

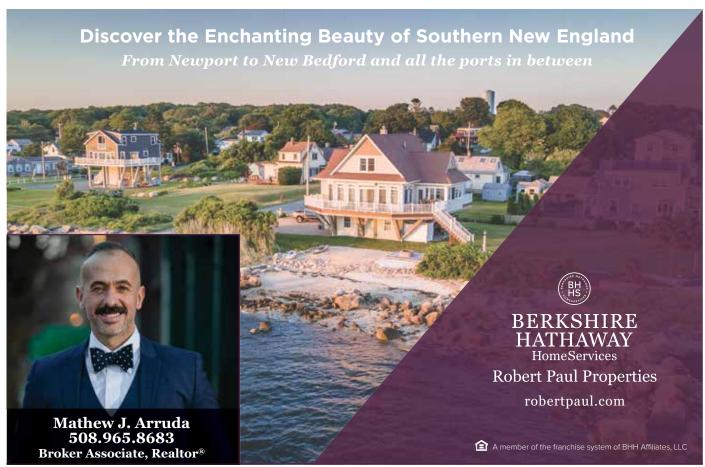
TMC: When I did Fade, I literally had 48 hours to prep for first rehearsal. I was at The Arts Administrators of Color Conference in DC, and I had to prepare during conference breaks. I had never worked with any of the designers, as (original director) Diane Rodriguez chose them before she had to step away from the show. So this is the first time I'll be working on a mainstage show at Trinity without last-minute chaos. With Sueño, there was more time to prep, establish great initial conversations, and decide the vision of the show early. I am grateful for Diane's blessing to work on Fade, as it helped launch my career. With Sueño, I am looking forward to bringing Jose Rivera's work to life on the Trinity Stage, while dedicating this play to Diane's memory.

Sueño runs in the Dowling Theater April 7 – May 8. For more information, and to buy tickets, visit

trinityrep.com/sueno or call the ticket office at (401) 351-4242.

Photo sidebar: "Tatyana at Trinity"







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Catching up with Ricardo Pitts-Wiley

When we last interviewed Ricardo for August Wilson's *Radio Golf* in 2020, he told us it was a personal mission of his to appear in every play in August Wilson's Century Cycle, whether in a full production or a staged reading. With *Gem of the Ocean*, he's reached that goal...but he's already established another one.

"I actually want to go on stage and actually be in all of the [American Century Cycle] shows, which is different than doing a reading, so I've technically still got a few to go," Ricardo said.

In 1987 at Trinity Rep, Ricardo portrayed ambitious trumpeter Levee in *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* opposite Barbara Meek as the titular character. A few years later he'd play Jim Bono, friend of the former Negro League baseball player Troy Maxson, in *Fences* at Trinity Rep. Ricardo appeared in three other productions of *Fences* outside of Trinity Rep, both as Bono and Troy. In Trinity Rep's 2000-01 Season, Ricardo played the family patriarch Doaker in *The Piano Lesson*, and returned 20 years later as Elder Joseph Barlow in *Radio Golf.*

At various points in his life, Ricardo's participated in staged readings of the remaining shows: Joe Turner's Come and Gone, Seven Guitars, Two Trains Running, Jitney, and King Hedley II. Ricardo said there are some shows he's more interested in being in a production of than others, though when asked what his favorite Wilson play is, Ricardo said it tends to be whichever one he's working on at the time. He'll always have a soft spot for Ma Rainey for being his first Wilson show, Ricardo noted, but all of the plays in the American Century Cycle offer an unapologetically Black perspective rarely seen in American theater.

"Wilson presents the authentic African-American experience, and his plays don't try to be accommodating to the Eurocentric way of doing things," Ricardo said when explaining his love for Wilson's work. "They give Black actors an opportunity to be their authentic selves because the characters are so open and accessible, and believable and conflicted and troubled, and hopeful. Everything that makes up the Black experiences are presented in these plays, but they present all kinds of challenges."

These challenges, Ricardo says, include the rhythms of Wilson's words. He told us that just as actors learn how to "speak Shakespeare," actors must also learn how to "speak Wilsonian."



Ricardo said that unlike Shakespeare, where actors are traditionally expected to be formally trained, understanding Wilson is more like improvisational jazz.

This can be a challenge. "But as an actor, who doesn't want to challenge?" Ricardo remarked.

With Gem, Ricardo continues to admire Wilson's writing, but he's most excited for the team he gets to work with on it. He reunites with resident company member Joe Wilson, Jr., with whom Ricardo shared the stage in Radio Golf and was directed by in 2021's A Christmas Carol. Director Jude Sandy and actor Dereks Thomas also worked on Radio Golf, so Gem of the Ocean is something of a reunion for the four artists.

Rose Weaver and Ricardo started their work in the Wilson canon together in *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, when Rose played Ma Rainey's lover, Dussie Mae. Ricardo last worked with Rose at Trinity Rep in *The Piano Lesson*, where she played his character's niece, Berniece. Ricardo can't wait to collaborate with the *Gem* cast and crew, explaining that he enjoys that everyone has input as the show takes shape.

"Part of the journey is not knowing where you got to end up, except that you're going end up doing something magnificent," Ricardo remarked.

Outside of August Wilson work, Ricardo's kept himself busy. This winter he appeared as Jacob Marley in *A Christmas Carol* at Trinity Rep.

"I'm at a point in my life where it has to be something important with a real value for me to go on stage," Ricardo said. "When you're younger, just having a job is important, but now you want to do projects you're totally invested in. With A Christmas Carol, Joe approached me about a way of doing the show and playing Marley that I found very interesting and compelling. And I think we were able to execute a vision that was worth doing, because we got to redefine Marley and redefine Black people in the world of A Christmas Carol."

As founder of Mixed Magic Theatre in Pawtucket, Ricardo continues to be involved with the organization, where his son Jonathan is currently artistic director. Due to pandemic uncertainty, Ricardo isn't sure what the theater will produce next, but he'd like to soon present a play he wrote, *The Trial of Frederick Douglass*. The play follows Frederick Douglass, Abraham Lincoln, and John Brown as they're brought back from the dead and they put each other on trial.

Mixed Magic's mission is to bring diverse stories to the stage. But Ricardo said Mixed Magic wants to foster diversity behind the scenes too. He suggested the future of Mixed Magic lies in training the next generation of Black theater professionals - not just actors, but designers, stage managers, and theater personnel - who are underrepresented in Rhode Island and nationwide. He wants young Black people to know that theater can be a great career option, on or off stage.

"We have to find ways of making sure that that as we come out of COVID that [theaters] don't become so interested in rebuilding audiences that certain audiences get left behind, because they've been ignored in the past and they'll be ignored again," Ricardo remarked. "I'm determined not to let that happen."

Mixed Magic Theater will hold readings of two other August Wilson plays in March: *King Hedley II* and *Seven Guitars*. To learn more and purchase tickets, visit **www.mmtri.org**.



Ten Weeks with August Wilson

Virtual class teaches Wilson's legacy

Anyone who wants to jump headfirst into the history, legacy, and ideas of August Wilson's American Century Cycle can do so right here at Trinity Rep! The virtual course 10 Weeks with August Wilson: The American Century Cycle begins on February 26.

Prior to each week's class, students read that week's script on their own time. In chronological order, the scripts are: *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.* During the class's weekly meeting, participants discuss the time period each play is set in before diving into the show itself.

"As folks are waiting for class to start, I always play music from the particular decade that week's play took place in," Director of Community Engagement Michelle Cruz, who instructs the class, said. "So the beginning portion is usually a history lesson, through music, food, and just the history of the time, and discussing what was happening for African-Americans then."

The class then discusses the themes of the show, looking at specific scenes and passages. As the class goes on, they also explain how all the plays in the cycle tie together, whether through recurring characters or overlapping themes.

So how did the class start at Trinity Rep? During the pandemic, Michelle decided to entertain herself by reading the entire American Century Cycle in chronological order. She wondered if anyone else would be interested in doing the same thing, so she and Director of Education and Accessibility Jordan Butterfield decided to create the course, especially after the success of our production of *Radio Golf* in early spring 2020. The first 10-week course began in January 2021 and sold out within days. Based on the high demand, a second session was added which ran April – June 2021.

"It was really nice to connect with people, especially at that point in the pandemic and in the winter," Michelle said. "We had folks from New Zealand in the class. One gentleman was from Sri Lanka. There were lots of local folks too, including Louis Giancola, the chair of our Board of Trustees. And the age range was super cool, too. We had everything between a 16-year-old student, all the way up to someone in their 80s."

After the success of the first two sessions and with August Wilson's *Gem of the Ocean* on stage this winter, it seemed natural to add another session.

With the concepts of Wilson's work ranging from the lasting legacy of slavery to what it means to be Black in modern America, the Cycle is especially relevant today. Michelle said this should lead to plenty of thoughtful conversations.

"A lot of the themes are going to stay the same compared to the last time I taught this course, but unfortunately so much has transpired within Black America since I did that first class," Michelle said. "And I can certainly add new things related to what's been going on. There's so many themes that are pretty prevalent in Wilson's work that's unfortunately still relevant today."

In the spirit of Wilson's work, some seats in the class will be reserved for Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) students who may not have access to the course otherwise. In addition to providing a unique learning opportunity, Michelle said guaranteeing spots for BIPOC students will lift BIPOC voices and deepen the discussion on works primarily about the lives of Black Americans. These students will attend for free.

Michelle can't wait to facilitate the conversations in this class, and see Wilson's work live on stage once again.

"I'm looking forward to the fact that we can actually experience theater again," Michelle confided. "It was hard talking about these plays, but with no option to actually go see them. It's nice that people could come to *Gem of the Ocean* and say in the class 'When I was there, I felt this, or I noticed that.' We didn't know when the theater was going open again last time, and a couple of folks said they'd come see these shows together once things opened up, since they bonded so much in the class."

To register for the course, visit trinityrep.com/education. If you enroll, we recommend that you purchase the play scripts from your local Black-owned bookstore. Visit https://www.cntraveler.com/story/black-owned-bookstores to discover Black-owned bookstores you can buy from online.



Give back to your community and become a Volunteer Usher!

Trinity Rep is grateful to have a community of dedicated volunteer ushers. Here's your chance to join our incredible team! Ushers perform essential duties at each performance — handing out programs, scanning tickets, and directing patrons while creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for all. We couldn't do what we do without them, and ushering is the easiest way to give back while seeing Trinity Rep's award-winning shows. Ushers also get a complimentary seat at the performance when they volunteer, space permitting. To learn more about ushering, please email Suzanne Tidwell, house services manager, at stidwell@trinityrep.com. Or leave a message at (401) 453-9200 and include your name, a telephone number, and email address.

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By Jackie Sibblies Drury May 19 – June 19, 2022 **Pulitzer Prize-winning drama**

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-NEW YORK TIMES

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Trinity Rep is your home fordramatic discoveries.

We acknowledge the lands where Trinity Rep stands in Downtown Providence today as once the lands of the Masswascut—The Land between the two rivers, and the territory of Meshanticut, which are the ancestral homelands of the Narragansett, Pokanoket, and Nipmuc people.

We also acknowledge that as contemporary Rhode Islanders, we hold the legacy of this state's economic foundation through its participation in the triangle slave trade. We encourage you to research and personally acknowledge these legacies, and support our contemporary Indigenous and Black communities in actionable ways.

NATIONALLY CELEBRATED

Founded in 1963, Trinity Rep has long been nationally recognized for excellence and innovation. The company received the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theater in 1981, produced four television productions for PBS, toured India and Syria, and was the first American theater company to perform at the Edinburgh International Festival in Scotland. Trinity Rep's Project Discovery program, which celebrated 50 years of student matinees in 2016, became a national model for arts education.

Trinity Rep shapes the future of the nation's theater through the development and production of new plays, as well as the Brown University/ Trinity Rep MFA program — a tuition-free, three-year program that is one of the leading actor and director training programs in the world.

LOCALLY MADE

Trinity Rep's celebrated artistic company members make Providence their home and are proud to be a part of this community. They provide an artistic foundation that allows directors and playwrights to achieve heightened levels of creativity and encourage the audience to feel more connected to the creative work and organization.

Community connections are made and strengthened daily through robust education and engagement programs. In a single season Trinity Rep's educational programs reach more than 20,000 Southern New England students through performances, in-school visits, and backstage workshops. Engagement opportunities range from conversations with artists to community partnerships. Trinity Rep is committed to inclusion at every level of the organization, including programs like open captioning and sensory-friendly performances.

Located in downtown Providence, Trinity Rep has long been a driving force behind the creativity that fuels and defines the region. From its roots in Providence's Trinity United Methodist Church, Trinity Rep moved in 1973 to its present home, the Lederer Theater Center in downtown Providence. Built in 1917 and formerly known as the Majestic Theater, the historic building now houses two performance spaces: the Elizabeth and Malcolm Chace Theater (500+ seats) and the Sarah and Joseph Dowling, Jr. Theater (200+ seats.)

Employing more than 275 artists, educators, and administrators, the organization generates over \$21 million in economic activity annually.

CONSTANTLY CREATIVE

Trinity Rep is committed to reinventing the public square and inspiring dialogue by creating emotionally-stimulating live productions and innovative education programs for all ages and abilities. Whether classical or contemporary, all of Trinity Rep's productions connect audiences with the play in meaningful and sometimes surprising ways. Its annual production of *A Christmas Carol* is new every year and has brought families together for over 40 years.

Artistic director since 2006, Curt Columbus has embraced the Trinity Rep aesthetic established by founding Artistic Director Adrian Hall and continued by his successors: Anne Bogart, Richard Jenkins, Oskar Eustis, and Amanda Dehnert. Together, with Interim Executive Director Jennifer Canole, Columbus



is committed to creating unparalleled theatrical experiences for and with the community.

OUR MISSION

Trinity Rep's mission is to reinvent the public square with dramatic art that stimulates, educates, and engages our diverse community in a continuing dialogue.

OUR VALUES

Company • We provide eclectic, bold, and original theater through our resident acting company. Since 1964, we have proven that a company of resident artists is the best vehicle to achieve the best theater, while at the same time contributing to the vibrancy of the community. Our vision for the artistic company includes artists of diverse backgrounds and ages, with a range of talents and abilities, including acting, writing, and directing. A resident company provides playwrights and directors a unique opportunity to develop new work specifically suited to the strengths of actors, and to re-imagine classic work in innovative and ground-breaking ways. We will premiere at least one production each year developed specifically for our company, and continue to revitalize and define our company in the years to come.

Community • We are a public square. We are a cultural resource, a public square, where the ideas and issues of our time and of our culture are pondered, discussed, and debated, sparked by the work on our stages. We provide rich, engaging opportunities in our classrooms, talkbacks, and online materials. We are committed to our location in downtown Providence. Renovating and conserving our building is fundamental to who we are and why we exist. Our vision for our physical plant includes more space for public gatherings and educational programs, as well as better technical support.

Education • We offer in-depth educational opportunities. We contribute to the well-being of this region in innumerable and profound ways, most especially through our educational programs. The work on our stages is a point of genesis, not the end point, for our numerous education programs: Project Discovery, a student matinee program founded in 1966, has given over 1.4 million students the experience of live theater; the Brown University/Trinity Rep MFA Acting and Directing programs are among the top graduate studies programs in the world, developing the next generation of theater artists; and our myriad life-long learning educational courses serve not only thousands of children each year, but adults of all ages.

ANTI-RACISM

We at Trinity Rep acknowledge our complicit and too-often active involvement in upholding and benefiting from structures of racism and oppression. We have resolved to meaningfully place anti-racism at the center of all of our work. We are committed to developing, sharing, and holding ourselves accountable to short- and long-term goals, with full recognition that this work has no endpoint. More information about our commitment and our goals, as well as an opportunity to provide feedback on this work can be found at www.trinityrep.com/antiracism.



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Inside the Prop Shop

Where does Trinity Rep get the turkey in each year's *A Christmas Carol*? Who provides the period-accurate furniture in Aunt Ester's house in *Gem of the Ocean*? And how were the letters in *Tiny Beautiful Things* not crumpled and torn by the end of the run? The answers to all of those questions lie in Trinity Rep's prop shop.

S. Michael Getz has been with Trinity Rep for over 25 years, and currently serves as Props Supervisor. Prop Artisan and Brown/Trinity Rep Props Supervisor Tiago Rodrigues, is a more recent addition, joining the company in the summer of 2021. Together, Michael and Tiago find, make, or refurbish all of the props used in Trinity Rep shows. Props can include anything from the smallest of trinkets a character carries on stage to large pieces of furniture like tables and couches.

Michael realized he wanted to pursue a career in props in college, and credits an apprenticeship with a professional theater in Pennsylvania with teaching him the tricks of the trade.

"When I was younger, I really wanted to be an actor," Michael said. "I was a big fish in a small pond in high school, but in college I was just getting small supporting roles. And I always had an interest in interior design, antiques, and furniture, so I started doing props. It was sort of my way of combining everything that I was interested in."

Tiago also found the world of props after working in different aspects of theater.

"In undergrad I used to just do like everything theater- wise," Tiago remarked. "I used to work in the shop, and be an actor, and do more technical stuff. For one of the student shows, the teacher picked out everyone's positions for that show, and I was assigned to props. That's when things started clicking: I realized that this was fun and interesting, and I wanted to do more of it. From there on out I just started doing more and more props and learned more about them."

Props can be an important part in telling a story on stage, so the first thing Tiago and Michael do when determining which props to use for a specific show is to read the script. They then discuss with the director the vision for the show and consult the set designer so props are thematically consistent with the scenery.

"I really enjoy the collaboration process, and I'm grateful to the staff here willing to listen to my input as well," Michael said. "I especially felt that on this year's A Christmas Carol, because [set designer] Sara Brown and [director] Joe Wilson, Jr., they were very respectful of my ideas and input."

The team has to consider their budget when selecting props. Then they sit in on a designer run-through before rehearsal moves to the stage so they can see how the actors move with the proposed props. During the run of the show, production assistants are responsible for giving props to actors backstage as needed.

So how do Michael and Tiago get the props? Depending on the object, they may already have it ready to go. Trinity Rep has a 35,000 square foot warehouse used for storage, and Michael estimates that the entire bottom level consists solely of stored props. Sometimes finding a prop is as easy as

searching storage, but others need a bit more TLC.

"Furniture and such can be found but sometimes it needs to be changed for a show," Michael said. "During Fred's party in *A Christmas Carol* this year, that large ottoman was actually something that was in stock in our storage, but I completely refurbished it."

A Christmas Carol is a different show each year, but tends to reuse the most props since the story beats stay the same. That doesn't mean these props





have to be identical from one production to the next.

"I think one of the reasons that *A Christmas Carol* is so successful is because we don't bring the same show out of a box every year," Michael explained. "And that makes us our audience is curious, wondering what we're going to do with the show each year. Obviously, some things are reused, the turkey is almost always the turkey. Certain things are the standard prompts for the story. But we try to make things different."

An example of a difference in 2021's production was the gingerbread house at Fezziwig's party. Tiago crafted that by himself. Most props are not made directly due to the time, cost, and labor required, but some shows call for objects that need to be unique. There's also the matter of maintaining props: sometimes props need to be refurbished in the middle of a show's run, and rarely, replaced entirely.

Michael said he most enjoys working with props for realistic period pieces, citing the props needed for an extravagant manor in 2008's *Blithe Spirit* as an

example. More recently, he enjoyed working on *Little Shop of Horrors* in 2018. Michael liked working with the puppet that brought Audrey II, the show's evil plant, to life, though he noted that the puppet was rented.

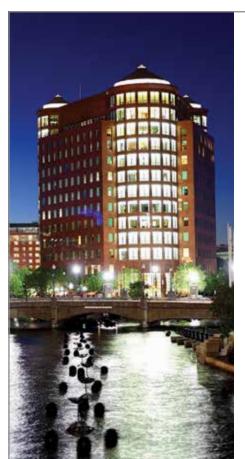
One of Michael's most memorable prop experiences came from 2013's avant garde production of *Crime and Punishment*, directed by Brian Mertes. The prop shop provided a working hot plate and microwave so actors on stage could make turkey bacon and popcorn live on stage.



Tiago's only done props for a few shows at Trinity Rep since he's a fairly recent addition to the staff, but he said Brown/Trinity Rep's production of *The Late Wedding* was a joy to work on. The show, which director Aileen Wen McGroddy described as having "dream logic," featured a myriad of props ranging from umbrellas and old-fashioned telephones to accordions and paint can drums to glowsticks actors waved during a cover of "Total Eclipse of the Heart." Next, he'll work on the props for the Four in Rep shows, and he's most interested to work on the props for *Angels In America*, directed by Andrew Watring. Tiago's especially interested in determining how to bring the Angel in that show to life, which Andrew reported will be inspired by Indigenous religions and portrayed by Indigenous actor Chingwe Padraig Sullivan.

Both Michael and Tiago agreed that each show leads to a completely different experience, and they enjoy having to figure out the "puzzle" of determining where to get props, and how to fit them into a show.

"I love that you never really know what challenges come ahead," Tiago remarked. "And it's always fun to think 'This is what we need, how are we going to figure it out? The entire process of problem solving is enjoyable, and it feels like there's never a similar thing every time you do a new show."



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UP NEXTat Trinity Rep

March 3 – March 22: Brown/Trinity Rep MFA Four in Rep - Pell Chafee Performance Center

Each spring, second-year students in the Brown/Trinity Rep present two shows, together known as Two in Rep. But this year, you'll get twice as many shows with Four in Rep! Read more about each of the Four in Rep Shows on page 34 or at www.trinityrep.com/mfashows.

March 4 – 10: *Everybody* by Branden Jacobs-Jenkins, directed by JaMario Stills

March 3 - 9: Constellations by Nick Payne, directed by Carol Ann Tan

March 15 – 21: Angels in America: A Gay Fantasia on National Themes, Part One: Millenium Approaches by Tony Kushner, directed by S. Andrew Watring.

March 16 – 22: Collective Rage: A Play in Five Betties by Jen Silverman, directed by Molly Houlahan

March 10, April 27, and June 9: Neighborhood Voices - Virtual

The newest addition to our Community Engagement programming is Neighborhood Voices. These conversations are inspired by the work on our stages, but familiarity with the plays is not required. Mark your calendars and check www.trinityrep.com/neighborhoodvoices for more information about Neighborhood Voices events for the rest of the season. These events are free with advanced registration required.

Gem of the Ocean: March 10 at 7:00 pm

Sueño: April 27 at 7:00 pm

Fairview: June 9 at 7:00 pm

April 7 – May 8: Sueño translated and adapted by José Rivera from the play by Pedro Calderón de la Barca, directed by Tatyana-Marie Carlo - Dowling Theater

A humorous and haunting metaphysical story peppered with intentional anachronisms, *Sueño* is a contemporary English-language reimagining of Life is a Dream, considered one of the jewels of the Spanish Golden Age. Years after a Spanish prince is imprisoned at birth based on astrological predictions, the young man is released to test the prophesies. Once freed, his actions could either earn him the throne or return him to a lifetime of isolation to question the very nature of reality and humanity.

May 5 – May 15: *Death and the Maiden* by Ariel Dorfman, directed by Eddie DeHais - Pell Chafee Performance Center

Brown/Trinity Rep student Eddie DeHais will direct *Death and the Maiden* for their graduate thesis project. More details coming soon at www. trinityrep.com/mfashows.

May 19 – June 19: Fairview by Jackie Sibblies Drury, directed by Christopher Windom - Chace Theater

This stunning Pulitzer Prize winner begins simply: It's Grandma's birthday, and Beverly needs the family's celebration to be perfect. But her husband is no help, her sister is getting into the wine, her brother hasn't arrived, and her teenage daughter's secrets threaten to derail the day. Then this family comedy takes a surprising turn, becoming an unpredictable and thrillingly theatrical experience that boldly confronts perceptions of race and identity.

May 31: America Too: It's Our Service

In 2022, America Too will focus on the many ways that service can manifest and the enormous impact it has on our community, whether through the military, education, or volunteerism. This free event is scheduled for May 31, 2022 with more information to follow in the coming months.

RECURRING EVENTS

Prologues

One hour prior to every subscription series performance, a member of the cast leads a 30-minute discussion with a peek into the play-making process and other details to enhance your playgoing experience. Each Prologue concludes with a Q δ A with the audience. There is no late seating for the Prologue.

Closing Night Talk Back and Toast

The final performance has a special energy. It's the last time the production will ever be seen, and the artists and audiences can start reflecting on the totality of the experience. Following the final performance of every show, we invite audiences who've come to the production at any point in the run to join the cast in a 20-minute post-show conversation and a toast to the show. What better way to celebrate a successful run and look forward to what's next?

Because Closing Night occurs after the performance, the times are dependent on each show's running time. Please check the running time once the show has opened or contact the ticket office for confirmation at (401) 351-4242 or tickets@trinityrep.com.

Student Matinees Lead to Dramatic Discoveries

For 57 years, Trinity Rep has introduced live theater to generations of young people with the student matinee series Project Discovery.

Beginning as a pilot program with a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, Project Discovery has since evolved into a series in which over 1.4 million students have participated. With Project Discovery, a class attends a live show exclusively for schools, and receives additional resources such as study guides and discussions with the show's cast and crew after the performance.

"Basically, it's a gateway program," Associate Education Director Matthew Tibbs said of Project Discovery. "It allows students to come in during the school day with their classes and their teachers to see the same show that we perform for the general public. It's not changed or edited down in any way, but we do provide additional supports to that experience, because it's often one of the first times students are coming to see live theater."

Not only has Project Discovery given access to live theater for kids and teens who may have not seen a show otherwise, but the program has influenced Trinity Rep's theatrical style, even outside of student shows.

"We talk a lot about the Trinity Rep style of sort of 'in your face' theater, with the audience being surrounded by the story, having actors come down in the aisles, or the audience being directly in conversation with actors on stage," Tibbs said. "And I think a lot of that style started because of Project Discovery. When [founding Artistic Director] Adrian Hall noticed that the productions of old were losing the attention of students, Adrian and the company decided they wanted to reach out and keep the young audience especially engaged with the story. That has kind of stuck with us as a company and in our productions."

This year, Trinity Rep will hold Project Discovery matinees for *Gem of the Ocean* on March 11 and March 17, and one for *Sueño* on April 28. Classrooms were also able to watch the streaming version of this year's A Christmas Carol through

Project Discovery, along with a study guide that could be accessed online.

Each year, the education team selects one "centerpiece" show in the season known as the Project Discovery Plus show. This show is the one that Trinity Rep's education team feels is most strongly tied into a school's curriculum. *Gem of the Ocean* is this year's Project Discovery Plus play, so classes that attend a performance of the production can have three free workshops with Trinity Rep artists.

"August Wilson is such an influential American playwright, and such a strong voice for the African- American experience in this country," Tibbs said. "His work is taught in curriculums today, but not usually Gem, so this is a unique tie into something that's already being taught, to help deepen the understanding of this playwright and his American Century Cycle. Plus, we produced *Radio Golf* for Project Discovery in early 2020, so it's been really enjoyable for us to get to offer August Wilson for a couple seasons. I think this show resonates so beautifully with the classroom and current events, and Project Discovery is a way to uplift one of the lesser-known August Wilson works."

Sueño, the next show this season, will also have a Project Discovery performance. An adaptation of the Golden Age Play by Pedro Calderón de la Barca, Sueño is a modernized version of the tale with hilarious and haunting moments. Tibbs said that this show and Gem are very different but offer unique educational opportunities for students.

"I think the show is silly in a lot of ways that students will enjoy," Tibbs commented. "I'm excited for Tatyana Marie-Carlo's direction, since I think she is a very youthful director and loves intergenerational dialogue and play. I also think it's important for us also to elevate Hispanic heritage, especially with Providence Public Schools having a large percentage of the population that is Hispanic or Latinx. It's a lovely way to allow these students to be seen on stage and for us all to celebrate different types of stories."

Tibbs emphasized that Project Discovery not only encourages lifelong learning but can engage in and

enhance connections with the local community: connections that can carry well into adulthood.

"We're in a unique position to have kind of a statewide tradition with Project Discovery," Tibbs told us. "A lot of times when we're greeting a school bus coming to see a Project Discovery show, I hear passersbys on the street saying 'I remember my trip to see *A Christmas Carol'* or some other show. And I think that's such a beautiful way to be in conversation with the community, and to start that connection to arts.

To learn more about the program, visit trinityrep.com/project-discovery.



Brown/Trinity Rep presents

Four in Rep

Each spring, second-year students in the Brown/Trinity Rep present two shows, together known as Two in Rep. But this year, you'll get twice as many theatrical experiences! These four shows, all varying in tone and topics, are an excellent opportunity to see the work of the next generation of leaders in theater. To learn more and purchase tickets, <u>visit trinityrep.com/mfashows</u>.



CONSTELLATIONS

By Nick Payne Directed by Carol Ann Tan '23 March 3 – 9, 2022

Endless possibilities of love and loss

There are multiple universes running parallel in which every sort of outcome is possible...including the ways Marianne and Roland's relationship can go. They may meet and never see each other again, or they may meet and fall in love. He might break her heart, or maybe she'll break his. They could stay together forever, or lose each other tragically early. By mining the infinite possibilities of one relationship, Constellations explores whether heartbreak and hope can exist in the same universe.

trinityrep.com/constellations

EVERYBODY

By Branden Jacob-Jenkins Directed by JaMario Stills '23 March 4 – 10, 2022

Exploring death with dark happiness

A modern version of the 15th century morality play, Everyman, Everybody presents the journey we will all take one day: death. Our main character Everybody is told they are going to die and are given a chance to convince someone to accompany them. Frantically searching for someone to join them in death, Everybody speaks to virtues like Friendship, Kinship, and other ideations that held meaning in life. Daring and darkly comedic, Everybody asks what we leave behind when we die, and if we are truly alone in life and death.

trinityrep.com/everybody

ANGELS IN AMERICA: A GAY FANTASIA ON NATIONAL THEMES: PART ONE: MILLENIUM APPROACHES

By Tony Kushner
Directed by S. Andrew Watring '23
March 15 – 21, 2022

Decolonizing a contemporary classic

This reimagining of one of the most frequently produced American plays asks: Who is America, and what is America for? Focusing on the intersected lives of those most impacted by the AIDS crisis, Angels in America confronts colonization and spirituality alongside longstanding themes of progress and tradition. A call to arms for making change, this production is a riveting new take on a modern classic.

trinityrep.com/angels

COLLECTIVE RAGE: A PLAY IN FIVE BETTIES

By Jen Silverman Directed by Molly Houlahan '23 March 16 – 22, 2022

A queer and occasionally hazardous exploration

Betty is lonely; Betty is rich; Betty's busy working on her truck; Betty wants to talk about love, but Betty needs to hit something. And Betty keeps using a small hand mirror to stare into parts of herself she's never examined. Five people, all named Betty, collide at the intersection of anger, sex, and the "thea-tah." Investigating why we do "thea-tah" at all, this chaotic comedy centers all-consuming self-realization and the extreme tenderness of the queer and rageful heart.

trinityrep.com/rage







The Arts Create Jobs, And Not Just for Artists



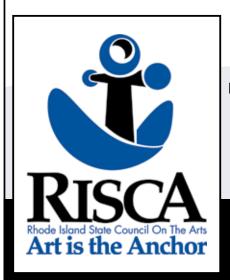
photos left to right: Kingston Chamber Music Festival; Trinity Repertory Company (by Mark Turek).; The Steel Yard (by Force 4 Photography).

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The perfect "Prologue" before the show

Trinity Rep provides more than just top-notch theater: We pride ourselves as a public square for education and community engagement. That's why each season show begins with what we call a Prologue.

One hour before each show in the subscription season, a cast member leads a Prologue, or a roughly half-hour-long spoiler-free discussion about the production. It's designed to give the audience context regarding the play itself, the production process, and the artists that put it together here at Trinity Rep. At the end of the discussion, there will be a $Q\bar{\otimes}A$ session where the audience can ask the cast member questions they may have. Cast members might ask the audience questions too. What's more, the entire experience is included free with your ticket!

"Prologues are a great way to get a sneak peek into the playmaking process," Director of Community Engagement Michelle Cruz said. "We strive to build more of the public square sentiment as we take a deeper dive into what you are about to see."

Trinity Rep held Prologues since 2017 and continued to do so through the last live show at Trinity Rep before the theater closed early in the pandemic. *Tiny Beautiful Things* will be the first show to include Prologues since then, so we're all very excited to bring them back. Michelle emphasized how especially now, we should consider how Prologues tie into community and current events.

"One of my favorite parts of our Prologues is the community connection to our plays: What does this mean for this production? Why here? Why now?

Why this particular story at this particular moment?" Michelle said. "For example, during the Prologues for *Radio Golf* in winter 2020, we were able to tie in the story of the Cape Verdean matriarch of the Alves family in the now-gentrified Fox Point neighborhood and find the parallels to the Hill District and [the character] Aunt Esther from the August Wilson American Century Cycle].

There is also a $Q \bar{Q} A$ session at the end of every Prologue, and Michelle urges audiences to get involved.

"We've had some pretty interesting conversations around themes of our plays, whether from *The Prince of Providence* and the legacy [Providence Mayor Buddy] Cianci left to our Captial city or even what it means to the "minority hire" as discussed in *Fade*. People really open up in this intimate setting and it sets an interesting tone before they really settle in their seats for each production."

If you ever wanted to learn about the playwright's life, how an actor prepared to play a character, or how Trinity Rep's team put together the production's technical aspects, stopping by a Prologue could be a great experience for you!

Please note that there is no late seating for Prologues. The 30-minute event begins one hour prior to the start of each performance and is included with the price of each ticket.





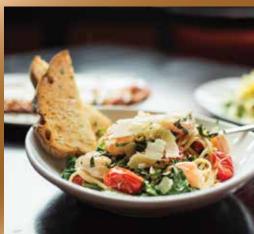
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Road to Admission An in-depth look at the Brown/Trinity MFA application process

It's been two years since Brown University/Trinity Rep's last audition cycle for graduate acting students, but that changes in 2022! Let's take a look behind the scenes to see how the program plans to build the Class of 2025.

Trinity Rep and Brown University's joint Masters of Fine Arts Programs in Acting and Directing allow students to learn and work with professional artists at Trinity Rep. The program didn't admit a new acting cohort in 2021 so that the program could focus on current students.

Admission to Brown/Trinity Rep was always competitive, but became even more so after the program was made tuition-free in 2018. Applications have nearly doubled since then and there are now about 500 actors applying for just 10 spots. On top of the standard grad school application elements like GPAs and letters of recommendation, applicants also submit a short personal essay explaining why they want to be an actor, and why at this moment in time.

"When we are reading those essays, we're really not reading for 'good writing,' whatever that is," Angela Brazil, director of the Brown/Trinity Rep MFA Programs said. "We're reading to understand this person's sense of who they are, and if they can communicate that passionately. That kind of knowledge of 'who am I in this moment' will be incredibly useful as they begin to work in many disciplines throughout the program. Trinity Rep is unique in that we train the whole artist, so all students learn acting, directing, and playwrighting."

Angela told us the most important part of the application process is the audition. All applicants prepare two contrasting monologues and perform them for the audition panel, consisting of Angela, Head of Acting Sophia Skiles, Assistant Professor of Acting Rachel Christopher, and Artistic Director Curt Columbus. This round is used to evaluate applicants' solo acting skills.

In a typical year, auditions are held in-person in New York City, Chicago, San Francisco, and Providence. Due to pandemic concerns this year, and to prioritize the health of all applicants and faculty, acting auditions were held virtually in January and February. Angela said she hopes this foray into virtual auditions may pave the way towards making future auditions more accessible for students who may not be able to attend in-person.

"I would always prefer to be in person, of course," Angela noted. "But after almost two years of adjusting to ever-evolving pandemic conditions, this is how most industry auditions and callbacks are being held. And that will probably continue to be the case, and not just because of the pandemic. There's a big shift in the industry as we continue to think deeply about creating more access for people. And traveling can be an expensive thing. But I think with virtual auditions, we're largely still able to see what we need to see."

The audition panel then selects which applicants receive callbacks. During callbacks, actors work together in small groups, contrasting with the solo first-round auditions.

"One of the things that's very important to us at Brown/Trinity is the ability to work in ensemble," Angela said. "It's critical for us to create a callback situation in which we can watch people work together in small groups because we want to see that part of their artistry. We want to see how they collaborate, what their ensemble skills are like, and to see how folks can take direction."

After callbacks, the panel narrows it down to ten potential students and sends out the first wave of admissions offers. The panel selects this group based on their audition, their ability to take direction, their collaborative work in a callback, their writing, and supporting documents in their application.

The process is a bit different for directing students. Directors are asked to submit a directorial analysis of a play. Head of Directing Brian Mertes or Directing faculty member Melissa Kievman interviews applicants one-on-one about their artistry. The next round includes a group interview, and from there, the program selects six finalists.

"For the final round, we really need to see potential directing students work with actors, so we bring them here to the campus," Angela said. "They each choose a scene that they'd like to direct, and they are given rehearsal time with two actors. They then present the work in front of the community."

After the final showcase, the admissions team offers two directors admission to the program.

All accepted students are asked to visit campus before making their decision. Here, they can participate in workshops with faculty, meet current students, see Brown/Trinity Rep and Trinity Rep shows, and ultimately determine if they can see themselves attending the program.

"I can't say this enough: Every year, the group of people that comes in the fall is the group of people that is supposed to be here," Angela said. "It's astonishing, and really quite beautiful."

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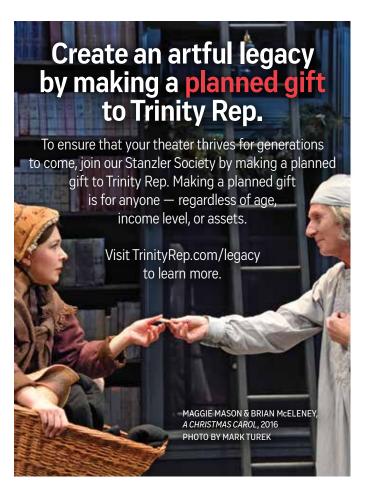
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Thank you for your continued support!



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Gem of the Ocean • February 24 - March 27, 2022

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WED.	THURS.	FRIDAY S	ATURDAY
FEB. 20	21	22	23	24 PWYW PR 7:30 PM	25 PR 7:30 PM	26 PR 7:30 PM
27 OC PR 2 PM	28	MARCH 1 PR 7:30 PM	2 ON 7:30 PM	3 7:30 PM	4 7:30 PM	5 7:30 PM
6 2 PM 7:30 PM	7	8	9 2 PM 7:30 PM	10 7:30 PM	11 7:30 PM	12 7:30 PM
13 2 PM 7:30 PM	14	15	16 SF 7:30 PM	17 7:30 PM	18 7:30 PM	19 2 PM 7:30 PM
20 2 PM 7:30 PM	21	22	23 OC 2 PM OC 7:30 PM	24 0C 7:30 PM	25 0C 7:30 PM	26 OC 2 PM OC 7:30 PM
27 OC 2 PM	28	29	30	31	APRIL 1	2

Sueño • April 7 - May 8, 2022

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WED.	THURS.	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
APRIL 3	4	5	6	7 PWYW PR 7:30 PM	8 PR 7:30 PM	9 PR 7:30 PM
10 OC PR 2 PM	11	12 PR 7:30 PM	13 ON 7:30 PM	14 7:30 PM	15 7:30 PM	16 7:30 PM
17 2 PM 7:30 PM	18	19	20 2 PM 7:30 PM	21 7:30 PM	22 7:30 PM	23 7:30 PM
24 2 PM 7:30 PM	25	26	27 SF 7:30 PM	28 7:30 PM	29 7:30 PM	30 2 PM 7:30 PM
MAY 1 2 PM 7:30 PM	2	3	4 OC 2 PM OC 7:30 PM	5 0C 7:30 PM	6 OC 7:30 PM	7 OC 2 PM OC 7:30 PM
8 0C 2 PM	9	10	11	12	13	14

Fairview • May 19 – June 19, 2022

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WED.	THURS.	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
MAY 15	16	17	18	19 PWYW PR 7:30 PM	20 PR 7:30 PM	21 PR 7:30 PM
22 OC PR 2 PM	23	24 PR 7:30 PM	25 ON 7:30 PM	26 7:30 PM	27 7:30 PM	28 7:30 PM
29 2 PM 7:30 PM	30	31	JUNE 1 2PM 7:30 PM	2 7:30 PM	3 7:30 PM	4 7:30 PM
5 2 PM 7:30 PM	6	7	8 SF 7:30 PM	9 7:30 PM	10 7:30 PM	11 2 PM 7:30 PM
12 2 PM 7:30 PM	13	14	15 OC 2 PM OC 7:30 PM	16 0C 7:30 PM	17 0C 7:30 PM	18 OC 2 PM OC 7:30 PM
19 OC 2 PM	20	21	22	23	24	25

KEY TO CALENDARS

PR Low-Priced Preview
OC Open Captioned

ON Opening NightSF Sensory Friendly

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ARTISTIC COMPANY

Stephen Berenson, Angela Brazil, Tatyana-Marie Carlo, Rachel Christopher, Timothy Crowe, Janice Duclos, Daniel Duque-Estrada, Mia Ellis, Taavon Gamble, Rebecca Gibel, Mauro Hantman, Phyllis Kay, Brian McEleney, Jude Sandy, Anne Scurria, Stephen Thorne, Charlie Thurston, Rachael Warren, Joe Wilson, Jr.

ARTISTIC AND MABEL T. WOOLLEY LITERARY DEPARTMENT

The Arthur P. Solomon & Sally E. Lapi	des
Artistic Director	Curt Columbus
Resident Designer	Eugene Lee
Resident Artists Marta V. N	Martínez, Michael McGarty
Playwright-in-Residence	Deborah Salem Smith
Director of Community Engagement .	Michelle Cruz
Resident Associates	Tatyana-Marie Carlo,
Taavo	on Gamble, Joe Wilson, Jr.
Literary Affiliate	Rachael Warren
Artistic Assistant	Gia Yarn
Commissioned Artists	Charise Castro-Smith
Rachel Christopher, Jackie Sibbl	ies Drury, Marcus Gardley
Orlando Hernández, J	James Ijames, Katie Pearl
Deborah	Salem Smith, Jude Sandy

EDUCATION & ACCESSIBILITY

Director of Education & AccessibilityJordan Butterfield
Associate Education DirectorMatthew Tibbs
Education Programs Coordinator
Teaching Artists Emma Becker,
Annie Belkin, Matthew Bretschneider, Michelle Cruz, Curt
Columbus, Jackie Davis, Danny Duque Estrada,
Taavon Gamble, Dave Rabinow, Crespo Rosario,
Linda Sutherland, Matthew Tibbs,
Rachael Warren, Joi Wright, Gia Yarn
Sensory Friendly Consultant Daniel Perkins
Open Caption Operators Caitlin Howle, Jessica Toporoski

PRODUCTION

Producing Director	Jenniter McClendon
Covid Compliance Officer	Erin Sylvia
Production Assistants	Shoshana Adler, Polly Feliciano
Production Stage Manager	Alec E. Ferrell
Assistant Stage Manager	Amanda Kosack
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SCENERY

Technical Director	Ian Stillman
Stage Supervisor	Michael McGarty
Charge Scenic Artist	Taylor Kmetz
Carpenters	lan Hudgins, Seth Mankoski,
Michael Greene	. Alison Castaneda, Petr Favazza

LIGHTING

Lighting Supervisor	Steve McLellan
Assistant Lighting Supervisor	Abigail Wang
Light Board Operators	Ayla Taffel, Alex MacBeth
Overhire Electrician	Casey Cherry

COSTUMES

Costume Director	Amanda Downing Carney
Cutter/Draper & Shop Supe	ervisor William Young
First Hand & Crafts Artisar	nAlyssa J. Karnes
Costume Technician	Lizzy Pegler
Costume Apprentice	Xochi Cartland
Hair & Wig Artisan	Tiffany Zellner
Overhire Staff	Lilv Bell, Rose Figueira, Julie Padovan

PROPERTIES

Props Supervisor	S. Michael Getz
Prons Artisan	Tiago Rodriguez

AUDIO

Sound Engineer	Peter Sasha Hurowitz
Sound Technician	Jordan Del Pino
Sound Board Operator	Jonathan Beals
Sound Apprentice	Cat Slanski

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Director of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion,	
and Anti-Racism	Monique Austin
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Auditor WithumSmith+Brown	n, PC, Karen Kowgios

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Assistant Director of Development	Tina Langill
Major Gifts Officer	Viguens Louis
Development Officer	Maddie Ulevich
Development Coordinator	Colin Baylor
Grants Writer	Emily Atkinson

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Communications Associate	Laura Weick
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Assistant Ticketing & Sales Manager	Nicolette Theroux
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-	Ruari Morrisor
House Services Assistants	Katherine Niedzwiadek
	Daniel Perkins
Ticket Specialist	Lindsay McCanr
Receptionist	Kelly McDonald
•	•

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Security & Property Supervisor.	Shawn Williams
Security & Property Assistant	Daniel Quinones, Steven Levitt

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Many thanks to our dedicated volunteer ushers.

Special thanks to the Huntington Theatre Company Props Department for their assistance with our production of Gem of the Ocean.

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