

PLAYBILL

Perceptions Theatre

"National New Play Network Rolling World Premiere"

The Wash

Written by Kelundra Smith

Directed by Myesha-Tiara

Nov 1 to Nov 30 at

7558 S South Chicago Ave (ETA Creative Arts Foundation)



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Perceptions Theatre views it as critical to acknowledge the indigenous tribes that originally inhabited the land that our show is taking place on.

In the 1500s, the Chicagoland area was filled with marshes and interconnecting rivers. The Algonquin tribe dubbed the land after its plantlife, "shikaakwa." This translates to "onion," "onion field," or "striped skunk."

Chicago's rivers connected and nurtured many Indigenous North American tribes, including, but not limited to: the Council of the Three Fires (The Odawa Tribe, the Ojibwe tribe, and the Potawatomi Nations); the Miami tribe, the Ho-Chunk tribe, the Menominee tribe, the Sac tribe, and the Fox tribe.

As the centuries passed, Western colonization and trade in the Americas had increased. This led Jean Baptiste Point du Sable to, in 1780, found the trading area that would eventually be annexed as Chicago by the United States in 1837.

In modern times, Chicago is home to the sixth-largest Urban American Indigenous community in North America.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to strengthen the accessibility of theatre to the African-American/Black communities of South Shore and to be an economic and artistic resource for BIPOC artists.

Our tagline is that we change the way people perceive the world around them one show at a time and we do just that! By highlighting Black Playwrights stories, especially those from the Southside of Chicago, who oftentimes aren't able to get their work produced as often in the community that their works are written for. We work hard to make sure the shows and training we offer is done by people that look like the community we are in.

Learn More About Perceptions Theatre:

www.perceptionstheatre.org

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Perceptions Theatre
PRESENTS

THE WASH

Written by
Kelundra Smith

Director
Myesha-Tiara

Assistant Director
Jerluane “Jae” Jenkins

Choreographer
A’Keisha Lee

Stage Manager
Autumn Dancy

The Wash is a part of a National New Play Network Rolling World Premiere.
(For more information, please visit nnpn.org)

COMPANY

Cast Members

ANNA.....Nikki Carpenter

JEANIEAudrey D. Allen

THOMASINE.....Myah “MJ” Jackson

CHARITY A’Keisha Lee

JEWEL Rita Wicks

MOZELLE Jill Iverson

THOMASINE & CHARITY USMarcia Eastmond

JEWEL USRaven Williams

MOZELLE USTeagan Fitzpatrick

COMPANY

Director Myesha-Tiara
Assistant Director Jerluane “Jae” Jenkins
Choreographer A’Keisha Lee
Dialect Assistance Shadana Patterson
Dramaturgy.....Antonia Laché

Technical Design And Production Team

Stage Manager Autumn Dancy
Assistant Stage Manager Madie Barnas
Scenic & Costume DesignerMari DeOleo
Lighting Designer Jerluane “Jae” Jenkins
Sound Designer Autumn Dancy

Playwright Kelundra Smith's Artist Statement

I am a playwright who uplifts the voices of people in the contemporary South by connecting our present-day experiences to important historical events. I am the daughter of Black southern parents who are the children of Black southern parents who were the children of Black southern parents. The geography and culture of the South form my being and inform my work. It looks like pine needles blowing in the breeze; smells like earth after the rain; sounds like jazz and gospel in equal measure; and tastes like collard greens with turkey necks. This is my American experience.

I came to playwrighting (after a decade as a theater critic covering shows in the Southeast and on Broadway) because of whose stories I didn't see onstage. The plurality of Black people in America have long resided in the Southeast, and I see my plays as restorative narratives. Most of my plays are works of historical fiction that celebrate the lives of people who were unafraid to abandon the familiar, start over, and risk losing everything in the name of self-determination. Since these topics can be difficult to navigate, I infuse humor, magical realism, and lyrical movement into my work.

The Reconstruction Trilogy is a long-term project, which consists of three plays about the trials and triumphs of Black Georgians after the Civil War. With "The Wash," "The Vote," and "The Knot," I highlight the areas that emancipated Black people focused on in the 19th century: socioeconomic mobility, popular sovereignty, and the family. Moving into the 20th century, "Monarchs" is a drama about a family moving from Jackson, Mississippi to Chicago, Illinois for a chance at a better life during the Great Migration and the Great Depression. Finally, in the 21st century, "Other Paths to God" is a whodunit about a group of nurses who find themselves at crossroads in the careers and spiritual lives while also being scapegoated in an embezzlement scheme during a harrowing pandemic—I know.

Since my background is in theater criticism and journalism, inspiration for me usually comes from reading articles, essays, and narrative nonfiction as well as interviewing subject matter experts. Elizabeth Gilbert wrote in her book "Big Magic" that ideas are invitations. I know that an idea is a play when an idea that won't let me stay home, so to speak. From there, in the words of "Grey's Anatomy" creator Shonda Rhimes, character drives story. If I can make the audience care about someone, then they'll care about what happens to them. Then, from there, I usually work on dialogue and plot, usually writing the first draft without any stage directions and then adding action in subsequent drafts. On any project, I cultivate creativity, curiosity, care, and connection.

Imagining a vibrant future for Black people and other people of color is central to my work, because our best days are before us. Our ancestors mopped floors for free and marched across them for freedom. I am challenging people who experience my work to question the stories they tell in their families and social groups as well as the stories they have been told about America. I believe that the past is the best teacher we have, and that the liberation blueprint lives there and inside of each of us.

EXPLORE THE WORLD

ABOUT ANTONIA LACHÉ DRAMATURG



To learn about
Antonia. Scan
here



DOING THE MOST

Humble Brag, I am a multi-hyphenate creative artist. I am an actress, arts administrator, educator, and New Play Development dramaturg. My role as a New Play Development Dramaturg was studied and developed as a member of Working Title Playwrights (WTP).

Other things of note, I hold a double major in Theatre and Advertising, with a minor in Sociology from the University of Georgia, and I earned my MFA in Acting from Wayne State University.

Now, enough bragging. Let us take a moment to reflect on the work of the New Play Development Dramaturg.

Here is what I love about being a New Play Development Dramaturg.



ABOVE: I PERFORMED AS LENA WRIGHT DAY IN OAKLAND CEMETERIES' CAPTURE THE SPIRIT EVENT IN OCTOBER 2022. MRS. DAY WAS ONE OF THE ACTUAL INDIVIDUALS WHO WENT ON STRIKE IN 1881. SHE IS BURIED WITH HER FAMILY IN OAKLAND. TAKE A MOMENT TO LISTEN TO A FELLOW ACTRESS TELL HER STORY, SCAN THE QR BELOW.



NEW PLAY DEVELOPMENT DRAMATURG

As a New Play Development Dramaturg, I thrive on collaborating with playwrights to bring their vision to life! I'm deeply passionate about diving into scripts, offering feedback on structure, character development, and thematic clarity to help refine their work. For me, it's all about asking the right questions, providing rich contextual research, and ensuring that the story connects powerfully with the creative team and the audience. I love being the bridge between the playwright and the production team, transforming the words on the page into a vibrant, cohesive performance. My ultimate goal is to make sure the play is engaging, resonant, and completely true to the playwright's unique voice!.

MEET OUR COMPANY



Tanikia "Nikki" Carpenter Born on the South side of Chicago, Tanikia "Nikki" Carpenter is a playwright and actor. She is the founder of Good Content Productions which aims to preserve sacred stories through theatre and essays. Nikki received her B.F.A. in Media Studies from North Park University with a minor in Africana Studies. She is the creator of Black Theatre Chicago, which highlights Black theatre, actors and productions in the Chi. In 2024, she was chosen as a researcher/writer for the August Wilson Society's upcoming book "Centering & Celebrating Wilsonian Warriors". In 2025 she received the DCASE "Playwright In Residency" grant from the city of Chicago. That same year, Goodman Theatre workshopped her play as a part of their '100 Free Acts of Theatre' initiative. Her work includes Emmett's Photo and The Last Senior Home in Bronzeville. Chance the Rapper recently credited Nikki's original poem, "No Grandfather's in Chicago", with being the inspiration for his hit song "No More Old Men" featuring Jamila Woods. She's married to her amazing husband, Stephen, and they share a beautiful daughter, India. Writer. Actor. Connector.



Audrey D. Allen (JEANIE) is a Chicago based actor with experience on stage, film and the recording booth. Her television credits include NBC Chicago Med, The Chi and Shameless on Showtime. Audrey has also had roles in several independent films. You may have seen her in the national campaign commercial for Crestor as well as many other commercials. She is a graduate of Eastern Illinois University with a BA degree in Speech Communications/Theatre. She is delighted to have worked with the Goodman Theatre, Impact Theatre, and Pride Film and Plays. Audrey is a member of Sag-Aftra, and is reped by Lily's Talent.



Myah Jackson, MJ (THOMASINE) is a multidisciplinary artist and administrator from the Southside of Chicago. MJ holds a B.A. in English and B.S. in Communications focused in Theater Performance, and recently earned her MBA as well from Tennessee State University. Her poetry was featured at the Orlando Museum of Art, winning Best in Show at Black Girl Theatre Magic's Onja event in 2019. She also began performing with Sistastyle Productions in Nashville in 2019 and remains an active board member. In 2023, she was nominated for the First Night Award's Best Featured Actor for her portrayal of Phoebe in Fan Me With A Brick. MJ most recently completed a Playwriting Fellowship with Tennessee Playwrights Studio, where she developed her third stage play, EDEN. She is also the founder of My First Love's Artist Cafe. Her creative mission is to "work with love not against hate". She's thrilled to return to 79th Street with Perceptions Theatre and looks forward to bringing this very special story to life



A'Keisha (CHARITY) is a dancer, singer, and actor based in Chicago, IL. She is thrilled to return to Perceptions Theater Company for another season. A'Keisha has performed in Chicago since 2021, making her Chicago debut in Perception Theater Company's Coronary Artery. She is a company member of Queer Dance Freakout and the Hail Marys. Catch A'Keisha with the Hail Marys in their monthly slot at Untitled Supper Lounge in the Unbridled Show. A'Keisha is thankful to the production team and her castmates for an incredible experience. Huge thank yous to her fellow castmates, Myesha-Tiara, and the entire team for an amazing and fulfilling journey.



Rita Wicks (JEWEL) is a classically trained actress, educator, singer, and host. Over the past decade, she has honed her craft through performances that foster connection, challenge societal norms, and drive progress. She received her training at Illinois State University and Columbia College Chicago, where she earned her B.A. in Acting. Her most notable credits include Splash Hatch on the E Going Down (Definition Theatre), Is God Is (A Red Orchid Theatre), Chicago P.D. (NBC), Some Sort of Saint (Definition Theatre), The Blackside (Congo Square Theatre), and Perdido (dir. Muhammad Bilal). She has also collaborated with Perceptions Theatre, Theater Wit, Shattered Globe Theatre, The Gift Theatre, Cats Cradle Theatre, and Ghostlight Ensemble. Rita is proudly represented by Lori Lins Ltd and remains deeply grateful for the communities who support her artistry. Stay connected with her work at linktr.ee/ritawickss.

MEET OUR COMPANY



Jill Iverson (MOZELLE) is thrilled to be joining Perceptions Theatre in this stunning production! Credits include: Carrie: The Musical, Minneapolis Music Theatre (Carrie White); Venus In Fur, Ohio University (Vanda Jordan); 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee, Artistry (Olive); If We Were Birds, 20% Theatre Company (Procne); Best Little Whorehouse in Texas, Artistry (Doatsey Mae); The Baker's Wife, Artistry (Genevieve); Kelly Girls, Factory Theater (Aoife US); A Christmas Carol, Metropolis Performing Arts Centre (Mrs. Cratchit); She Loves Me, Citadel Theatre (Ensemble/Amalia US). International Credits: SilverSea Cruise Lines World Cruise (Principal Vocalist). All the love to Philip and the cats for their unending support and care!



Marcia Eastmond (THOMASINE & CHARITY US) is a Chicago-born actor, photographer, creative director, and poet whose work explores identity, mental health, and spirituality. She earned her BA in Acting from Columbia College Chicago in 2020 and has since built a dynamic performance record. Her stage work includes the role of Imani in BLKS and a theatrical rendition of Langston Hughes' Ask Your Mama: 12 Moods of Jazz. As a poet, she has performed alongside Useni Eugene Perkins and Dr. Haki Madhubuti. She is currently the Creative Director of The Artistic Escape, a collaborative platform for storytelling, workshops, and poetic expression



Raven Williams is a theatre trained actor, based in Chicago. Recently performed with Pegasus Theatre. She also has previously been a supporting role in a few indie films. And various voiceover roles as "Voice of God." Raven's classical training in acting, singing, and movement brings a unique depth to each role. Raven continues to captivate audiences with a compelling presence and dedication to the craft.



Teagan Fitzpatrick (MOZELLE US) is an actor-comedian born and raised in Kansas City. She completed her B.A. in Theatre Performance from the University of Kansas before moving to Chicago in 2019. Since then, she has completed training from The Second City and the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, and has performed in sketch, improv, theatre, and more. Teagan is very excited to be joining the cast of The Wash. This will be her second time working with Perceptions, but this will be her debut production with the theatre.

DIRECTOR'S BIO



Myesha-Tiara

Myesha-Tiara hails from Baton Rouge, Louisiana and received her Bachelor of Science in Theatre Arts with a concentration in Performance and Directing. After college she performed for regional and touring theatres until she decided to make the big move to the Windy City. At the end of 2019 she also opened her own 501 c3 non-profit theatre company, Perceptions Theatre, on the Southside of Chicago. Some directing credits include Falsettos (Court & Timeline Theatre/ Jeff Nominated); Non Equity Jeff &, Black Excellence Awards Nominated, Panther Women: An Army for the Liberation (Prop Thtr & Perceptions Theatre);

A Hit Dog Will Holler (Artemisia); and The Little Foxes (Associate Director / Citadel Theatre Company). Some acting credits include: For Colored Girls... as Lady In Brown and Lady In Blue u/s (Court Theatre /Jeff Awarded); Steel Magnolias as Annelie (Theatre at the Center); The Wedding Band as Mattie (The Artistic Home/ Jeff Recommended) and Hamlet as Gertrude and Ophelia/Osric u/s (The Gift Theatre) and Oscar winning film 12 Years a Slave. She is Artistic Director of Perceptions Theatre (Emerging Theatre & Best New Storefront Awarded). She is represented by Shirley Hamilton.

PLAYWRIGHT'S BIO



Kelundra Smith

Kelundra Smith is a storyteller whose mission is to connect people to cultural experiences and each other. A Georgia native, she got into theatre because that's where teachers put the kids who talk too much in class. As a playwright, she has a passion for southern historical narratives and writing stories about people who no one else sees. Her play The Wash is a recipient of a National New Play Network Rolling World Premiere, with productions in Atlanta, St. Louis, Chicago, and New York. Kelundra is also

a theater critic and arts journalist whose articles about artists from historically excluded groups have been published in The New York Times, ESPN's Andscape, Garden & Gun, American Theatre, ArtsATL, Atlanta Magazine, and elsewhere. Her long-term goals are to land on The New York Times bestseller list, open a late-night dessert restaurant and have her plays adapted for television.

Want to Submit Your Play?

What We Are Looking For:

If your play causes a conversation after it is over then we want to read it! We don't put limits on what kind of plays we produce because we want our plays to be something that is there for every type of audience. So if you have a Sci-Fi, slice of life, surrealism, dramatic or comedic play then we want to read it.

*Our only submission requirement is that you are a playwright of color.

*When you submit your play please send a cover letter, so we can get to know more about you!

***We also do not currently produce musicals.**

Our Current Play Producing Structure:

BIPOC Playwrights Festival (10-20pgs long)

Stage Readings/Workshops (not ready to produce fully, need feedback or workshop)

Stand Alone Short Plays (20-50pgs long, ready to produce)

Full Length (ready to produce and over 50pgs long)

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What's Next at ETA



MOP & BUCKET BLUES FOLLOWS THE JOURNEY OF A DEDICATED JANITOR WHO HAS SPENT DECADES CLEANING UP CHICAGO SCHOOLS IN LOW-INCOME AREAS, BOTH LITERALLY AND FIGURATIVELY. WITH THE HELP OF A BRAVE NEW EX-NFL PLAYER TURNED PRINCIPAL, THEY CONFRONT THE CHALLENGES OF A STRUGGLING PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM WHILE FIGHTING TO CREATE A BETTER FUTURE FOR CREATIVE & ATHLETIC STUDENTS.

10-16-25-OPENING NIGHT 7:30PM

10-17 7:30PM

10-18 2PM & 6PM

10-19 2PM & 6PM

10-23 7:30PM

10-24 7:30PM

10-25 2PM & 6PM

10-26 2PM & 6PM

11-6 7:30PM

11-7 7:30PM

11-8 2PM & 6PM

11-9 2PM & 6PM

ETA THEATER

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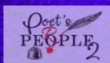
WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY L.A. HOLTS

PRODUCED BY

CARMA NEWMAN & L.A. HOLTS

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

ETA THEATER



MOP &
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BLUES