



**MANUAL CINEMA:
NO BLUE MEMORIES—THE LIFE OF GWENDOLYN BROOKS**

Thursday, November 29, 2018, at 7:30pm
Colwell Playhouse

PROGRAM

MANUAL CINEMA:

NO BLUE MEMORIES—THE LIFE OF GWENDOLYN BROOKS

Commissioned by the Poetry Foundation

Written by Crescendo Literary (Eve L. Ewing and Nate Marshall)

Sarah Fornace, director

Jamila Woods and Ayanna Woods, music composers

Ayanna Woods, music director

Drew Dir, storyboards

Drew Dir and Lizi Breit, puppet designers

Mieka van der Ploeg, costume designer

Claire Chrzan, lighting designer

Ben Kauffman, sound designer

Mike Usrey, sound engineer

Mariana Green, stage manager

N. LaQuis Harkins, Gwendolyn Brooks puppeteer

Rasaan Khalil, Haki R. Madhubuti puppeteer

Jyreika Guest, puppeteer

Felix Mayes, puppeteer

Sharaina L. Turnage, puppeteer

Shalynn Brown aka RED, drums

Ryan Nyther, trumpet

Terry Patrick, Jr., keyboard

Ayanna Woods, vocals, bass

Kamaria Woods, vocals, sound effects

For all North, Central, and South American booking inquiries please contact:

Laura Colby, Director, Elsie Management

laurac@elsiemanager.org

TEL: +1 718 797 4577

www.elsiemanager.org

Exclusive Asian Touring representation:

Broadway Asia Company

info@broadwayasia.com

TEL: +1 212 203 9986

www.broadwayasia.com

THANK YOU FOR SPONSORING THIS PERFORMANCE

With deep gratitude, Krannert Center thanks all 2018-19 Patron Sponsors and Corporate and Community Sponsors, and all those who have invested in Krannert Center. Please view their names later in this program and join us in thanking them for their support.

This event is supported by:



**RARE BOOK AND
MANUSCRIPT LIBRARY AT
THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN**

First-Time Sponsor



BRENDA & STEPHEN PACEY
Nine Previous Sponsorships
Three Current Sponsorships

**Ward
&
Associates**

REALTORS®
Debora M. Auble

**CORPORATE & COMMUNITY
BRONZE SPONSOR**

**HELP SUPPORT THE FUTURE OF THE ARTS. BECOME A KRANNERT CENTER SPONSOR
BY CONTACTING OUR ADVANCEMENT TEAM TODAY:**

KrannertCenter.com/Give • development@krannertcenter.illinois.edu • 217.333.1629

PROFILES

MANUAL CINEMA is a performance collective, design studio, and film/video production company founded in 2010 by Drew Dir, Sarah Fornace, Ben Kauffman, Julia Miller, and Kyle Vegter. Manual Cinema combines handmade shadow puppetry, cinematic techniques, and innovative sound and music to create immersive stories for stage and screen. Using vintage overhead projectors, multiple screens, puppets, actors, live feed cameras, multi-channel sound design, and a live music ensemble, Manual Cinema transforms the experience of attending the cinema and imbues it with liveness, ingenuity, and theatricality.

Manual Cinema has been presented by, worked in collaboration with, or brought its work to The Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York City), Brooklyn Academy of Music (New York City), The Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, The Kennedy Center (Washington, DC), Under the Radar Festival (New York City), La Monnaie-DeMunt (Brussels, Belgium), The Noorderzon Festival (Groningen, Netherlands), The Kimmel Center (Washington, DC) The O, Miami Poetry Festival (Florida), The Tehran International Puppet Festival (Iran), Davies Symphony Hall (San Francisco), The Theatre at Ace Hotel (Los Angeles) and elsewhere around the world. They have collaborated with StoryCorps (New York City), Erratica (London), The Belgian Royal Opera (Brussels), Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, *Pop-Up Magazine* (San Francisco), Nu Deco Ensemble (Miami), *The New York Times* best-selling author Reif Larsen (New York City), and three-time Grammy Award-winning Eighth Blackbird (Chicago).

In 2018, the company will have debuts in Holland and Cairo, Egypt.

Featured Poems by Gwendolyn Brooks:

“Eventide”

“Beverly Hills, Chicago”

“We Real Cool”

“Gwendolyn Brooks” (by Haki Madhubuti)

“The Third Sermon on the Warpland”

“Speech to the Young, Speech to the Progress-Toward”

PUPPETEERS

JYREIKA GUEST made Chicago her home performing her one-woman show *Arn't I Still: Lessons of Her* for the Solo Chicago Festival four years ago. She's an active performer in the Chicago area, an ensemble member of The Plagiarists, and former ensemble member of Chicago Slam Works where she starred in three original shows in their debut season.

N. LAQUIS HARKINS is a graduate of Howard University. She was born and raised in Chicago. Since her initial work with the Hip Hop Theatre Junction (*Rhyme Deferred*), Harkins has performed in various productions including *Repairing a Nation*, *How We Got On* (understudy), and *Blues for an Alabama Sky* (double understudy); in commercials (Kellogg's "Finding Dory;" Nissan Rogue for *Star Wars*); and in independent films. She recently produced her first short film *Kayla's Light* about families in Chicago dealing with tragic loss.

RASAAN KHALIL is a rapper, poet, and actor from Maywood, Illinois. He is a 2016 Poetry Incubator alumnus and a fourth-year student at the University of Illinois at Chicago, currently studying history with a minor in African-American studies. Influenced by artists such as Fela Kuti, Lupe Fiasco, and Saul Williams, much of Khalil's work explores faith, race, and coming of age in Chicago. He plays the role of Haki in *No Blue Memories*. Khalil's debut hip hop project is set to release in 2019. Khalil's work has been featured in *FakeshoreDrive* (blog) and elsewhere.

FELIX MAYES has had the opportunity to perform on stages from the New Jersey Performing Arts Center to the Lincoln Center to the Rudolfinum in Prague, Czech Republic, as a singer, actor, and dancer. He has participated in the Philadelphia Fringe Festival and Irene Ryan Acting Scholarships festival, as well as the American College Dance Festival. Mayes is a graduate of Muhlenberg College in Allentown, Pennsylvania.

SHARAINA LATRICE TURNAGE is from the South Side of Chicago. She is making her debut at Manual Cinema. Turnage received her Bachelor of Arts at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville where past credits include *Mayme (Intimate Apparel)*, *LaWanda/Topsy Washington/Norma Jean (The Colored Museum)*, and *Bernice (Servy-n-Bernice 4ever)*. Recent credits include *Los Milagros* (Free Street Theater) and *Grey Area* (FYI). Turnage has researched and performed theatre historically done by slaves, called Du Theater in Suriname, South America, and was amongst one of the first actors to perform Du Theater in the United States.

MUSICIANS

SHALYNN BROWN aka **RED** (drums) attended Columbia College Chicago majoring in music instrumental performance. While at Columbia, they started an all-female band, which is currently breaking ground in Chicago's underground music scene. Their favorite instruments to play are the drums, bass guitar, acoustic guitar and, of course, the piano. In Brown's spare time you can find them writing and recording music, humming, tapping their foot, or keeping a beat on a table.

RYAN NYTHER (trumpet) developed an early interest in music at Dixon Elementary School (Chicago) under the direction of Diane Ellis, focusing on all aspects of Black American music. He later learned from Chicago bebop/avant-garde legends including Fred Anderson, Von Freeman, and Willie Pickens. The skill set he developed helped him acquire a college scholarship and earn a bachelor's degree in jazz studies at Northern Illinois University. He currently tours internationally with the soulful group Dumpstaphunk based in New Orleans. Nyther is also in residency at Andy's Jazz Club with his long-standing collaborative project and group, the Trumpet Summit, playing the traditional, instrumental Black American music of the 1950s and 1960s. He is currently a freelance musician having performed with Isaiah Sharkey, Jamila Woods, Lupe Fiasco, Eric Roberson, Wynton Marsalis, Ivan Neville, Ramsey Louis, Roy Hargrove, Buddy Guy, Maurice Brown, Carl Weathersby, rhythm and blues group Mint Condition, James Carter, and many others.

AYANNA WOODS (vocals, bass, music director, composer) is a composer, singer, and multi-instrumentalist from Chicago. She earned her Bachelor of Arts in music composition from Yale University. Woods' pieces have been performed by the Wet Ink Ensemble, members of Fifth House Ensemble, the Chicago Children's Choir, and others. Her work as a writer and producer can be found in film scores for Revive LLC, in the viral web series *Brown Girls*, and in her own solo project, *Yadda Yadda*. She is a recipient of Third Coast Percussion's 2017 Emerging Composers Partnership. Her music explores the spaces between acoustic and electronic, traditional and esoteric, wildly improvisational and mathematically rigorous.

KAMARIA WOODS (vocals, sound effects) is a producer, multi-instrumentalist, singer, educator, and sister born and raised in Chicago. She cultivates her own sound, allowing pain, joy, and truth to coexist through honest lyricism and her unique style of production. Through an intimate exploration of ancestry and BLK/joy, Woods creates lullabies for the community and for the self.

STAFF & CREATIVE TEAM

LIZI BREIT (puppet designer, associate designer) is a Chicago-based artist working primarily across illustration, animation, sculpture, and performance. She has been working with Manual Cinema since 2011 and is currently serving as associate designer. She is an artistic associate with The Neo-Futurists and a former member of Blair Thomas and Company.

CLAIRE CHRZAN (lighting design) previously designed *The End of TV* with Manual Cinema. Other credits include *Evening at the Talk House*, *The Mutilated*, and *The Room* (A Red Orchid Theatre); *The? Unicorn? Hour?*, *Saturn Returns*

(The Neo-Futurists); *The Distance, We're Gonna Die* (Haven Theatre); *Caught* (Sideshow Theatre Company); *After Miss Julie, The Night Season* (Strawdog Theatre Company); *Peerless* (First Floor Theater); *Pinocchio* (Neverbird at Chicago Children's Theatre); *Love and Human Remains, Good Person of Szechwan* (Cor Theatre); *The Terrible* (The New Colony); *The Guardians, Uncle Bob* (Mary-Arrchie Theatre); *The Hero's Journey, Best Beloved: The Just So Stories, The Pied Piper* (Forks and Hope Ensemble). Chrzan also works as a production stage manager for various companies including Hubbard Street Dance Chicago's HS2, The Joffrey Ballet's Joffrey Academy, and Alonzo King LINES Ballet.

DREW DIR (puppet designer, co-artistic director) is a writer, director, and puppet designer. Previously, he served as the resident dramaturg of Court Theatre and a lecturer in theatre and performance studies at the University of Chicago. He holds a master's degree in text and performance studies from King's College London and the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art.

EVE L. EWING (playwright) is a writer and sociologist from Chicago. She is author of two books, *Electric Arches* and *When the Bell Stops Ringing: Race, History, and Discourse amid Chicago's School Closures* (forthcoming from University of Chicago Press). Her work has appeared in *Poetry*, *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, *The Atlantic*, the *Chicago Tribune*, and many other venues. She is a provost's postdoctoral scholar at the University of Chicago School of Social Service Administration where she does research on racism and American public schools.

SARAH FORNACE (director, co-artistic director) is a director, puppeteer, choreographer, and narrative designer based in Chicago. She is a co-artistic director of Manual Cinema. Outside

of Manual Cinema, Fornace has worked as a performer or choreographer with Redmoon Theatre, Lookingglass Theatre Company, Court Theatre, Steppenwolf Garage, and Blair Thomas and Company. Most recently, Fornace wrote the story mode for the video game *Rivals of Aether*. In 2017, she directed and edited the first episode of the web series *The Doula is IN*. In 2016, she directed and devised an “animation” production of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* with Rokoko Studios for HamletScenen at Kromborg Castle in Elsinore, Denmark.

BEN KAUFFMAN (sound designer, co-artistic director) is a composer, director, interactive media artist, and co-artistic director of Manual Cinema. His work has been shown at The Jay Pritzker Pavilion (Chicago), the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum (Chicago), and City University of New York’s Baruch College. Kauffman has lectured and given workshops at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York University, and Parsons The New School of Design in New York City. His past composer/sound designer credits with Manual Cinema include *Lula Del Ray*, *Ada/ Ava*, and *The New York Times* documentary *The Forger*. He holds a master’s degree from New York University’s Interactive Telecommunications Program (ITP).

NATE MARSHALL (playwright) is from the South Side of Chicago. He is the author of *Wild Hundreds* and an editor of *The BreakBeat Poets: New American Poetry in the Age of Hip-Hop*. His last rap album *Grown* came out in 2015 with his group Daily Lyrical Product. Marshall is a member of The Dark Noise Collective and co-directs Crescendo Literary with Dr. Eve L. Ewing. Marshall has received fellowships from Cave Canem, The Poetry Foundation, and The University of Michigan. He is the director of national programs for Louder Than A Bomb Poetry Festival. *No Blue Memories* is his first play.

MIKE USREY (sound engineer) has mixed in around 100 venues worldwide, ranging from large outdoor festivals to theatres and clubs. He toured internationally for three years with the band Dark Dark Dark (Minneapolis) as front of house engineer. He has also toured with Pillars and Tongues (Chicago), A Hawk and a Hacksaw (Albuquerque), Royal Canoe (Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada) and Pattern is Movement (Philadelphia). He has been the front of house sound engineer for Manual Cinema since 2014.

MIEKA VAN DER PLOEG (costume designer) has designed costumes for many Chicago theatres including Lookingglass Theatre, Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, The Hypocrites, Chicago Children’s Theatre, About Face Theatre, The House Theatre, Next Theatre, Griffin Theatre, The Building Stage, Albany Park Theater Project, Dog and Pony Theatre, and Manual Cinema. Van der Ploeg is an artistic associate at About Face Theatre. She has received two Jeff Award nominations for *Golden Boy* (Griffin Theatre) and *Mr. Burns* (co-designed with Mara Blumenfeld, Theater Wit).

JAMILA WOODS (composer) is a poet, singer-songwriter, and educator from Chicago. A recipient of the 2015 Ruth Lilly and Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg Poetry Fellowship, her poetry has been published by Poetry Foundation, Haymarket Books, and Third World Press. She currently works as associate artistic director of the non-profit organization Young Chicago Authors where she teaches poetry to Chicago youth and helps organize Louder Than A Bomb, the largest youth poetry festival in the world. As a singer-songwriter, Woods has collaborated with Chance The Rapper and Macklemore and toured supporting Corinne Bailey Rae. She also served as music consultant for the web series *Brown Girls*. Her critically acclaimed debut album *HEAVN* was re-released via JagJaguwar Records and Closed Sessions in 2017.