



**AUGUST WILSON'S GEM OF THE OCEAN**  
**ILLINOIS THEATRE**

Chuck Smith, director

Thursday-Saturday, October 17-19, 2019, at 7:30pm

Thursday-Saturday, October 24-26, 2019, at 7:30pm

Sunday, October 27, 2019, at 3pm

Colwell Playhouse



## **WELCOME TO THE 2019-2020 ILLINOIS THEATRE SEASON!**

It is a true pleasure to share our work with you. Students, faculty, and guests have come together to produce a year of exploration, of reflection, and of illumination. We are

proud to be in our second half-century as a theatre department, offering drama at the highest level. Illinois Theatre is a leading program with more than 200 students and nearly 40 faculty members. Housed in Krannert Center for the Performing Arts, we are fortunate to have the resources of a world-class environment for dramatic art and the commitment of hours beyond measure from a truly remarkable staff.

Theatre is a call to your senses and your spirit. As a call, it welcomes your response. Our work is meant to touch you deeply, to surprise, at times to unsettle, and always to offer you an opportunity for thought and further engagement.

This year's season reflects our commitment as a department and as individual artists, scholars, and makers to wrestle with the enduring mysteries of the human condition and with the critical questions of our times. Whether you are seeing a work from classical antiquity, performed thousands upon thousands of times,

or a new piece never seen before, the same is true. The material is ever renewed and always embedded in a history of work on the stage.

The season also reflects our commitment to a diverse, inclusive, accessible theatre. Whether on stage or behind the scenes, we strive to make work that reflects and makes space for our whole community. From the planning and design to the work you experience on stage, we believe theatre has the capacity to engage the world as it is in all its complex challenges and to envision and enact the world as it might be.

We are so pleased you have chosen to share this with us. We hope you enjoy it and look forward to seeing you again.

Gabriel Solis

Professor and Head, Department of Theatre



## **HELLO AGAIN, ANEW!**

As the "newly minted" Producer for Illinois Theatre, I echo the sentiments of Professor Gabriel Solis in warmly welcoming you to the 2019-20 Illinois Theatre season. This year will see many new, exciting changes at Illinois

Theatre as we continue to strive to bring you quality theatrical experiences even as we continue to grow as artists and creators ourselves.

Illinois Theatre has long been recognized as a wonderfully fertile space where students, faculty, staff, guest artists—and sometimes even unsuspecting audience members—have come together to communicate with each other through the medium of theatre, often times creating ephemeral yet enduring encounters that affect hearts, minds, bodies, and souls. Is that a bit “dramatic?” Ah, well, forgive my hyperbole, but the desire for connection that infuses our work colors all that we do. From the classroom to the scene shop to the stage, we at Illinois Theatre seek to connect—with each other and with you.

Pursuant to that, we are indeed continuing to focus our efforts on not just committing to but actually creating physical, aural, and visual spaces that are welcoming to human beings of all varieties. This is an ongoing journey, and to succeed, we need your support and your voice.

What you will see on our stages tonight is the product of every department head, faculty and staff member, and students past and present who have passionately worked to bring us all to this moment. If we have made you think, feel, ponder, or wonder, it is our honor to do so.

Welcome, and enjoy.

Lisa Gaye Dixon  
Producer, Department of Theatre



**THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS**

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Tonight's performance of *August Wilson's Gem of the Ocean*  
is sponsored in part by the following generous donors:

**SUSAN & MICHAEL HANEY**

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# PROGRAM

## **AUGUST WILSON'S GEM OF THE OCEAN**

### **ILLINOIS THEATRE**

Chuck Smith, director

Kemal Nance and Endalyn Taylor, choreographers

Thursday-Saturday, October 17-19, 2019, at 7:30pm

Thursday-Saturday, October 24-26, 2019, at 7:30pm

Sunday, October 27, 2019, at 3pm

Colwell Playhouse

**TIME:** 1904

**PLACE:** The Hill District, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in the parlor of Eli, Aunt Ester, and Black Mary's home at 1839 Wylie Avenue

### **ACT I**

*20-minute intermission*

### **ACT II**

This production includes the smoking of tobacco products, smog effects, and adult language and is intended for mature audiences only.

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August Wilson's *Gem of the Ocean* is presented by special arrangement with SAMUEL FRENCH, INC. Originally produced on Broadway by Carole Shorenstein Hays, Jujamcyn Theaters. Originally presented at National Playwright's Conference of The Eugene O'Neill Theater Center.

*This production of August Wilson's Gem of the Ocean is made possible with support from The Anda New Works Theatre Production Endowment Fund.*

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## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

When being interviewed, Black directors are usually asked, "What is your favorite August Wilson play?" My stock answer to the question is, "The one you are working on." Most directors I know who have worked on Mr. Wilson's plays don't think it is a fair question any more than asking a parent which of your children do you like the most. I've discovered that, with me, those things I consider my favorites are connected to pleasant memories attached to the event itself. Two favorite films I cannot pass over are an old John Wayne western called *Red River*—and while it is a good movie, what makes it special to me is that it is the only film I can remember enjoying in the company of both my parents—and *Godfather II*, first seen with the sweetheart who got away.

In 1997, I directed my first August Wilson play, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, at my artistic home, the Goodman Theatre in Chicago. The Goodman enjoys the luxury of a 10-show preview period covering two weekends. August Wilson came in the first weekend of previews and stayed through the opening to help me polish the show. The production set a Goodman box office record and was seen by the Vice President, Chicago's mayor, and a host of celebrities, including basketball great Michael Jordan and a state representative named Barack Obama. It was a good show, but what makes it special to me is that for a whole week I had August Wilson all to myself.

—Chuck Smith, director

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# **AUGUST WILSON'S GEM OF THE OCEAN**

**PLAYWRIGHT**

August Wilson

**DIRECTOR**

Chuck Smith<sup>^</sup>

**CO-CHOREOGRAPHER**

Kemal Nance

**CO-CHOREOGRAPHER**

Endalyn Taylor

**COMPOSER**

William Kilgore

**SCENIC DESIGNER**

Linda Buchanan<sup>+</sup>

**COSTUME DESIGNER**

Natalie Loveland<sup>+</sup>

**LIGHTING DESIGNER**

Robert Perry<sup>+</sup>

**SOUND DESIGNER**

Hayat Dominguez

**VOCAL COACH**

Allison Moody

**FIGHT COORDINATOR**

Vincent Carlson

**MUSIC COORDINATOR**

Gabriel Solis

**STAGE MANAGER**

Shea Hittman

<sup>^</sup>The director is a member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, a national theatrical labor union.

<sup>+</sup>Appears as a member of United Scenic Artists, Local USA 829 of the IATSE, the union representing professional scenic, costume, lighting, sound, and projection designers.

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# CAST

**AUNT ESTER**

Lisa Gaye Dixon\*

**ELI**

Latrel Crawford

**SOLLY TWO KINGS**

Nathan Ramsey

**BLACK MARY**

Charence Higgins

**CITIZEN BARLOW**

J'Laney Jenkins

**CAESAR WILKS**

Brandon Burditt

**RUTHERFORD SELIG**

Danny Yoerges\*

**CITY OF BONES DANCERS**

Angel Anderson

Faith Brown

Kennedy Cowan

Alexandria Kinard

Mya McClellan

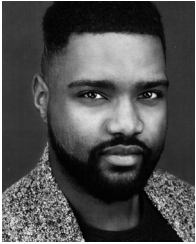
Ibrahim Sabbi

Jeremy Taylor

\*Appears courtesy of Actors' Equity Association (AEA), the union for professional actors and stage managers.

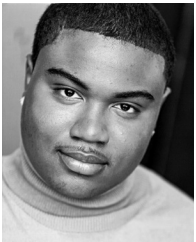


# PROFILES



**Brandon Burditt** (Caesar Wilks) is pursuing an MFA in acting at the University of Illinois. Originally from Redmond, Washington, Burditt attended Morehouse College, one of the highest-ranked historically Black colleges in the country. This

is his second production with Illinois Theatre. Past credits include *Seven Guitars* (Canewell), *The Colored Museum* (The Soldier), *Hoodoo Love* (Jib), and *Hit the Wall* (Carson). Lastly, he wants to extend his sincerest thanks to his mother, father, and sister for their unending support.



**Latrel Crawford** (Eli) is currently a junior pursuing a BFA in acting at the University of Illinois. His Illinois Theatre credits include *Marat/Sade* by Peter Weiss and *Hit the Wall* by Ike Holter. *Gem of The Ocean* marks his third production with Illinois

Theatre, and he is excited to bring August Wilson's character Eli to life after being a finalist in Chicago's 2017 August Wilson Monologue Competition. Past productions and projects include *Orfeo Ed Euridice* (Armory Free Theatre), *Impulse 24/7* (Armory Free Theatre), Director's Workshop (Armory Free Theatre), among others. Other theatre credits include Jeff Award-nominated *truth and reconciliation* (Sideshow Theatre Company); *The Project(s)*, *This Beautiful City* (American Theatre Company); and Zora Neale Hurston's one-acts (Illinois High School Theatre Festival).



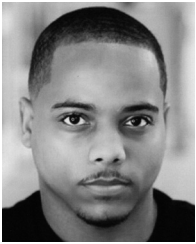
**Lisa Gaye Dixon** (Aunt Ester) has worked professionally across the country and around the globe. She began her professional career with the Steppenwolf Theatre Company of Chicago in a revival of *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide*

*When The Rainbow is Enuf*. She has performed on the stages of the Royal Shakespeare Company and the New Globe Theatre in London and regionally in the United States at the Goodman Theatre (Chicago), The Attic Theatre (Detroit), Lost Nation Theatre (Montpelier, Vermont), Kitchen Theatre and Geva Theatre Center (New York), and others. Dixon has written and premiered a one-person piece entitled *My Case Is Altered: Tales of a 21st Century Roaring Girl*. Professional directing credits include *King Lear* at Optimist Theatre (Milwaukee), *Detroit '67* for Clarence Brown Theatre (University of Tennessee), and *Ladyish* at Illinois Wesleyan. Film credits include *The Trouble with Men and Women* BBC/IFC), *Leading Ladies*, and *USING*.



**Charence Higgins** (Black Mary) is a Mississippi native with degrees in psychology and theatre from Jackson State University and is continuing her education at the University of Illinois in her second year of the MFA acting program. A few previous roles

include Judy in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* at Illinois Theatre, Shelby in *Steel Magnolias* at Madison Center Players, Lorraine in *Hairspray* at New Stage Theatre, Miss Evers in *Miss Evers' Boys* at Jackson State University, along with an exciting stint in several historic roles at the Smithsonian Institute's American History Museum and African American History and Culture Museum in Washington, DC. With this being only the second production of an August Wilson play at Illinois Theatre, Higgins is completely overjoyed to be seen in her first play by this incredible American playwright.



**J'Laney Jenkins** (Citizen Barlow) is a second-year MFA acting student from North Carolina. He received his undergraduate degree from North Carolina A&T State University as a theatre and journalism student. He performed in multiple shows

at A&T including *In the Red and Brown Water*, *Topdog/Underdog*, *Black Nativity*, and *The Colored Museum*. He was also a national award winner at the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival in Washington, DC. This is Jenkins' second performance with Illinois Theatre; he was last seen in *Hit the Wall* as Mika.



**Nathan M. Ramsey** (Solly Two Kings) is a second-year MFA acting student at the University of Illinois. A Bronx native and United States Air Force veteran, Nathan received his BS in exercise science from Lehman College and trained at the American

Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York City. Past productions include *King Henry IV, Part I* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (Montana Shakespeare in the Parks), *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (Illinois Theatre), *Tame That B!#@H* (Illinois Theatre), *Rent* (The Duplex Cabaret, New York City), *Waiting for Lefty* (Lehman College), *The Passion of Antígona Pérez* (Lehman College), *Waif & Stray* (New York University), and numerous independent films. He is thrilled to return to the KCPA stage. [www.nathanmramsey.com](http://www.nathanmramsey.com) Instagram/Twitter: @nathanmramsey

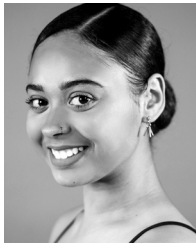


**Danny Yoerges** (Rutherford Selig) is a second-year MFA student. He comes to Urbana from New York where he often collaborated on performance projects with his wife, Rachel, who is pursuing her MFA in dance at the University of Illinois. His credits include *Hit*

*the Wall*, Illinois Theatre; *War Horse* (Joey/Topthorn), Broadway National Tour; *Illusionarium*, Norwegian Cruise Line; *Farragut North* (Stephen Bellamy) and *The Sound of Music* (Rolf), Olney Theatre Center; *All's Well That Ends Well* (Young Dumaine), Shakespeare Theatre Company; *Saturday Night* and *I Capture the Castle*

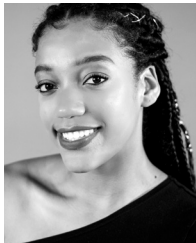
(readings), Signature Theatre; *Henry V* (Henry) and *Never in my Lifetime*, New York City. Yoerges received a BFA from the University of North Carolina School of the Arts.

[www.dannyyoerges.com](http://www.dannyyoerges.com)



**Angel Anderson** (City of Bones Dancer) is a fourth-year student at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign pursuing a dual degree in psychology and dance. Some of her recent performance credits include Endalyn Taylor and Raheim White's

"Kueendom of the Shade," Ell Emadian's "Back Quarter Time Turn," and Rennie Harris' "LIFTED," which premiered at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, Illinois.



**Faith Brown** (City of Bones Dancer), a graduate of the Youth Performing Arts School in Louisville, Kentucky, is pursuing a BFA in dance with a minor in business from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Some of her professional experiences

include interning at the Gibney Center and the José Limón Dance Foundation in New York City. Brown currently interns in the Department of Dance and serves as the junior class representative for the Student Board. At the U of I, she has choreographed several works for the 2018 and 2019 Studiodance II productions.



**Kennedy Cowan** (City of Bones Dancer) hails from Vallejo, California, where she studied dance at the Oakland School for the Arts under the direction of Reginald Ray-Savage and Alison Hurley. Through the Oakland School and subsequent summer

intensives at Joffrey in New York City, Cowan has worked with several notable artists including Endalyn Taylor (Dance Theatre of Harlem), Corrine Nagata (LINES, The Ailey School), and Jalen Preston (commercial dancer with Janet Jackson, Ariana Grande, and Jason Derulo). Currently, she is a sophomore in the BFA dance program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign where she received the Talent Student Scholarship. Cowan plans to pursue a career in the arts, dance, and fashion full-time after graduation.



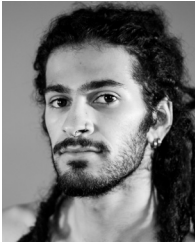
**Alexandria Kinard** (City of Bones Dancer), a native of Louisville, Kentucky, is a sophomore at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign where she is pursuing a BFA in Dance. She is the Department of Dance's first recipient of the Aaron R.

White Scholarship. Before attending the university, Kinard attended the Governor's School for the Arts in Kentucky, The Alvin Ailey Summer Dance Intensive, and the Mark Morris Summer Dance Intensive. Her Illinois performance credits include November Dance (Linda Lehovec), February Dance (Endalyn Taylor and Raheim White), Senior Thesis concert (LaTosha Pointer), and the Project 500 Gala (Endalyn Taylor).



**Mya McClellan** (City of Bones Dancer) is a performing artist studying dance at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Originally from Joliet, Illinois, McClellan has trained in several dance styles, but especially enjoys ballet and modern dance. While at

the U of I, she has performed in works choreographed by Endalyn Taylor, Sara Hook, and Renata Sheppard.



**Ibrahim Sabbi** (City of Bones Dancer) is a working choreographer, dancer, and visual artist. A native of Chicago, he is a BFA student in the Department of Dance at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Sabbi has performed leading roles in

works choreographed by Melanie Bales, C. Kemal Nance, Rebecca Netti-Fiol, and Endalyn Taylor. Ibrahim Sabbi has had experience in hip hop choreography and the battle scene in Chicago, Los Angeles, and Champaign-Urbana.



**Jeremy Taylor** (City of Bones Dancer), a native of Chicago, is a graduating senior in the Department of Dance at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Throughout his time at the U of I, he has performed in choreographies by Melanie Bales, Rebecca

Netti-Fiol, Kemal Nance, Endalyn Taylor, Danzel Thompson-Stout, and Israeli artist Omri Drumlevich. In May of 2018, Taylor won the Lisa Carducci Award for overall excellence in choreography and performance in the BFA dance program and later in August, he made his

professional debut in Rennie Harris' "LIFTED" at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, Illinois. Taylor is a member of the Black male dance initiative, A Nance Dance Collective ([www.blackmendance.com](http://www.blackmendance.com)) and will perform with the company in his first international venue at the Little Theatre in Kingston, Jamaica, for the Stella Maris Dance Ensemble's 26th Season of Dance immediately following *August Wilson's Gem of the Ocean*.

**Chuck Smith** (Director) is a member of Goodman Theatre's Board of Trustees and is one of Goodman Theatre's resident directors. He is also a resident director at the Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe in Sarasota, Florida and a member of the American Blues Theatre Company in Chicago. At Krannert Center, he has directed *Barbecue* and a staged reading of *Inheritance*. Goodman's credits include the Chicago premieres of *Pullman Porter Blues*, *By the Way*, *Meet Vera Stark*, *Race*, *The Good Negro*, *Proof*, and *The Story*; the world premieres of *By the Music of the Spheres* and *The Gift Horse*; James Baldwin's *The Amen Corner*, which transferred to Boston's Huntington Theatre Company where it won the Independent Reviewers of New England (IRNE) Award for Best Direction; *A Raisin in the Sun*; *Blues for an Alabama Sky*; *August Wilson's Two Trains Running*; *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*; *Ain't Misbehavin'*; the 1993 to 1995 productions of *A Christmas Carol*; *Crumbs From the Table of Joy*; *Vivisections from a Blown Mind*; *Having Our Say*; and *The Meeting*. Smith served as dramaturg for the Goodman's world-premiere production of *August Wilson's Gem of the Ocean*. He directed the New York premieres of *Knock Me a Kiss* and *The Hooch* for the New Federal Theatre and the world premiere of *Knock Me a Kiss* at Chicago's Victory Gardens Theater, where his other directing credits include *Master Harold . . . and the Boys*, *Home*, *Dame Lorraine* and *Eden*, for which he

received a Jeff Award nomination. Regionally, Smith directed *Death and the King's Horseman* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival), *Birdie Blue* (Seattle Repertory Theatre), *The Story* (Milwaukee Repertory Theater), *Blues for an Alabama Sky* (Alabama Shakespeare Festival), and *The Last Season* (Robey Theatre Company). At Columbia College, he was facilitator of the Theodore Ward Prize playwriting contest for 20 years and editor of the contest anthologies *Seven Black Plays* and *Best Black Plays*. He won a Chicago Emmy Award as associate producer/theatrical director for the NBC teleplay *Crime of Innocence* and was theatrical director for the Emmy-winning *Fast Break to Glory* and the Emmy-nominated *The Martin Luther King Suite*. He was a founding member of the Chicago Theatre Company where he served as artistic director for four seasons and directed the Jeff-nominated *Suspenders* and the Jeff-winning musical *Po'*. His directing credits include productions at Fisk University, Roosevelt University, Eclipse Theatre, ETA, Black Ensemble Theater, Northlight Theatre, MPAACT, Congo Square Theatre Company, The New Regal Theater, Kuumba Theatre Company, Fleetwood-Jourdain Theatre, Pegasus Players, the Timber Lake Playhouse in Mt. Carroll, Illinois, and the University of Wisconsin in Madison. He is a 2003 inductee into the Chicago State University Gwendolyn Brooks Center's Literary Hall of Fame and a 2001 Chicago Tribune Chicagoan of the Year. He is the proud recipient of the 1982 Paul Robeson Award and the 1997 Award of Merit presented by the Black Theater Alliance of Chicago. Smith recently received an Honorary PhD from his alma mater Governors State University.

**Linda Buchanan** (Scenic Designer) has designed at theatres throughout the country and abroad. Her work has been seen in Chicago at the Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf, Court Theatre, the Paramount, and regionally at Arena Stage, the Alley Theatre, Indiana Rep, Cleveland Playhouse, Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Kansas City Repertory Theatre, Idaho Shakespeare Festival, Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Syracuse Stage, Yale Repertory Theatre, Resident Ensemble Theatre, and many others. Buchanan's work has been published in *American Theatre*, *Stage Directions*, *Entertainment Design* (now *Live Design*), *TCl* (now *Live Design*), *Interior Design*, and *Contract*. Buchanan was included in in two USITT design exhibits (*Women in Design*, 1997, and *Evolution of a Designer*, 2010). Recent work includes *Having Our Say* (Goodman Theatre, Chicago), *Inherit the Wind* (Resident Ensemble Players, Delaware), *Pride and Prejudice* (Idaho Shakespeare Festival/Great Lakes Theatre), *You Can't Take It With You* (Indiana Repertory Theatre), and the premiere of *Quack* (Alley Theatre, Houston.) Notable past projects include the premiere production of *Marvin's Room* (10 regional productions and commercial productions in New York and London), the musical *Wings* (Goodman Theatre and The Public Theatre, New York), and the American premiere of *House and Garden* (Goodman Theatre). Buchanan has received the Merritt Award for Design and Collaboration, Jefferson Awards for *House* (Goodman Theatre), *Black Snow* (Goodman Theatre), and *I Hate Hamlet* (Royal George Theatre, Chicago), and a Helen Hayes Award for *Dancing At Lughnasa* (Arena Stage, Washington, DC). Buchanan is the former Head of Scene Design at The Theatre School at DePaul University.

**Hayat Dominguez** (Sound Designer) is a third-year MFA sound design student, and this is their fifth design while being here. They've had the pleasure of working on *[title of show]*, February Dance 2018, and *The Rape of Lucretia* as well as designing for *Marat/Sade*. Dominguez was also a part of the Jessica Lang Dance Residency in early August of last year. Previous to their time here, they obtained their BFA in theatre technology from the University of South Dakota and have worked for companies such as the Santa Fe Opera and the Denver Center for the Performing Arts.

**Shea Hittman** (Stage Manager) is a third-year MFA student in stage management at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Most recently, Hittman worked at Utah Festival Opera & Musical Theatre where she worked as the production stage manager on productions of *Bravo*, *Caruso!*, and *Master Class*. Her University of Illinois credits include stage manager for productions of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (Illinois Theatre) and *La Bohème* (Lyric Theatre @ Illinois); production stage manager for Studiodance I (2018, Dance at Illinois); and calling stage manager for February Dance (2018, Dance at Illinois). Hittman is an ensemble member at Theatre B in Moorhead, Minnesota, where she stage-managed productions of *Equivocation*, *33 Variations*, and *Gruesome Playground Injuries*.

**Mark Kennedy** (Properties Master) is a second-year MFA student at the University of Illinois. He received a BA in theatre (performance and technical design) and psychology from Edgewood College in Madison, Wisconsin. Prior to attending the U of I, he was the Assistant Technical Director and Props Master for First Act Children's Theatre in Madison, Wisconsin, for five years. Most recently, he was the Props Master for Heritage Theatre Festival's 45th Anniversary season in Charlottesville, Virginia.

**Natalie Loveland** (Costume Designer) is an MFA graduate of the University of Illinois, now based in New York. She is pleased to return as a guest artist to design this production of *August Wilson's Gem of the Ocean*. Last year, she had the pleasure of returning to design *Barbecue*. In New York, her designs have been seen at Classic Stage Company, Lincoln Center Education, Park Avenue Armory, Theatre Row, New York Theatre Workshop's Fourth Street Theatre, and The Flea Theatre, among others. Outside the city, Natalie has designed at The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey, Mile Square Theatre in Hoboken, Arkansas Shakespeare Theatre, and has served as a guest artist at several universities. Most recently, she designed for *Broadway Backwards 2019* at the New Amsterdam Theatre, Phillip Howze's *Self Portraits* at BRIC-Arts Media, and *Pipeline* at Mile Square Theatre. As an assistant, Natalie has worked on the National Tours of NETworks' *Dirty Dancing* and *Elf The Musical*, Irish Repertory Theatre, and regionally at American Players Theatre, Illinois Shakespeare Festival, and The Ohio Light Opera. Natalie is a proud member of USA Local 829. To view her work, please visit: [www.nataliemarieloveland.com](http://www.nataliemarieloveland.com)



**C. Kemal Nance, “Kibon”** (Co-Choreographer) a native of Chester, Pennsylvania, is a performer, choreographer, and scholar of African Diasporan Dance. He is an assistant professor in the departments of Dance at Illinois and African American Studies at the University of Illinois. Attendees at the Colloquium of Black Arts in Bahia, Salvador, knighted him with the nickname “Kibon”—the name of a Brazilian ice cream to reflect the “delicious time” they experienced in his movement class. He is a master teacher of the Umfundalai technique of contemporary African dance and has danced principle roles in the Umfundalai-based, professional company Kariamu & Company: Traditions (Philadelphia). Throughout his career, Nance has had a recurring performing presence with the late Chuck Davis’ African American Dance Ensemble (Durham, North Carolina). His writings about Chuck Davis will appear in two book chapters in the forthcoming anthology of essays, *African Dance in America: Perpetual Motion and Hot Feet*, this fall. Nance has danced with several neo-traditional and contemporary African dance companies including *Ibeji*, The Children of Shango, *Dunya*, and the Seventh Principle of which he was a founding member. He, with dance partner and long-time friend, Stafford C. Berry, Jr., has choreographed for and performed with the African American male dance initiative, the Berry & Nance Dance Project, and produced choreographies about Black manhood at national and international venues. Nance holds a BA in sociology/anthropology with the concentration in Black studies from Swarthmore College and MEd and PhD degrees in dance from Temple University. Dancers from his newly formed Nance Dance Collective will perform his latest work, *Red*, with Stella Maris Dance Ensemble in Kingston, Jamaica, right after *August Wilson’s Gem of the Ocean* closes. They will also perform in the Kingston-based television show *Smile*

and will be featured in his forthcoming dance film *Deez Nuts!: Black Bodies Dancing Defiance*. To stay abreast of Nance’s evolving creative and scholarly work, log on to [www.blackmendance.com](http://www.blackmendance.com).

**Robert Perry** (Lighting Designer) marks his fifth collaboration with the Illinois Department of Theatre with *August Wilson’s Gem of the Ocean*, having previously designed *Lost Lake* and *Long Lost* directed by Daniel Sullivan, *Assassins* directed by JW Morrisette, and *Much Ado About Nothing* directed by Kathleen Conlin. Off-Broadway designs include the New York premieres of David Mamet’s *Boston Marriage* (The Public Theatre) and *Reefer Madness* (Variety Arts Theatre), *Lost Lake* (Manhattan Theatre Club), *Iphigeneia at Aulis* (Pearl Theatre Company), and *Kingdom of Earth* (The Drama Dept.). Perry has also had a long-standing relationship with David Mamet and William H. Macy’s Atlantic Theater Company in New York City, having designed 18 shows for them including *Sexual Perversity in Chicago* (starring Clark Gregg), Harold Pinter’s *The Hothouse*, and David Mamet’s *The Water Engine* for which he received a Drama Desk Nomination. Regionally, Perry has designed for numerous theatres including the Goodman Theatre, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Arena Stage, La Jolla Playhouse, McCarter Theatre Center, Hartford Stage, Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, Shakespeare Theatre Company, Intiman Theatre, Triad Stage, Philadelphia Theatre Company, and Yale Repertory Theatre. He holds an MFA from the Yale School of Drama and a BFA from the North Carolina School of the Arts. Perry is a member of United Scenic Artists local #829 and is currently the Chair of the Lighting Design and Technology program and Co-Director of Level 21 at the University of Illinois. He is represented by APA—Agency for the Performing Arts, New York City.

**Endalyn Taylor** (Co-choreographer ) joined Dance Theatre of Harlem’s company in 1984, becoming a principal in 1993. Broadway credits include original casts of *Carousel*, *The Lion King*, and *Aida*. Taylor participated in the recording of the Grammy-nominated cast albums and performed for the 1993 and 1997 Tony Awards. Taylor ran a performing arts institute in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She served as the Director of the Dance Theatre of Harlem School and brought students to the White House to participate in an arts initiative of the Obamas and to perform for the First Lady and the spouses of the Heads of State’s Luncheon. Choreographic commissions include productions for The Dance Theatre of Harlem, Tribeca Performing Arts Center, Judas International Dance Company, and Collage Dance Collective. Taylor performed the co-choreographed “Chalk Lines” at the American Dance Festival in New York and most recently premiered a collaborative work entitled *The Counterpoint Project* in New York. Taylor serves as a national spokesman for Black ballerinas and has presented lectures and panels at Coventry University in England, Collegium for African Diasporic Dance, and National Association Schools of Dance and served as Keynote Speaker at the Black Women Rock, Empower Me Award Ceremony, Champaign Illinois. Film credits include *Center Stage* and Spike Lee’s *Malcolm X*. Taylor is the subject of the recently Mid-America Emmy-nominated, Big Ten Network-featured segment *Illinois Artist—Endalyn Taylor*.

**Naomie Winch** (Technical Director) is in her third year as an MFA candidate in scenic technology at the University of Illinois by way of Southern California. She is thrilled to be a part of Austin Wilson’s Gem of the Ocean. Winch’s most recent credit was as the assistant technical director for the New Harmony Theatre’s 2019 summer season. She holds another MFA in lighting design and technology and actively tries to integrate the imperceptible world of lighting design with the tangible world of scenic design and intermix both into global construction and renovation projects.



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# PRODUCTION STAFF

## **ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGERS**

Monique Arabie  
Tina Hermosillo\*

## **PRODUCTION ASSISTANT**

Jaira Stanley

## **TECHNICAL DIRECTOR**

Naomie Winch

## **PROPERTIES MASTER**

Mark Kennedy

## **HAIR/MAKEUP SUPERVISOR**

Courtney Horry

## **HAIR/MAKEUP COORDINATOR**

Melissa Hall

## **ASSISTANT TECHNICAL DIRECTOR**

Patrick Storey

## **ASSISTANT SCENIC DESIGNER**

Yvonne Tessman

## **ASSISTANT COSTUME DESIGNER**

Samantha Padillo

## **ASSISTANT LIGHTING DESIGNER**

Stephen Moderhock

## **ASSISTANT SOUND DESIGNER**

Daniel Massey

## **ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR**

Jordan Ratliff

## **SCENIC ARTIST**

Christina Rainwater

## **STAGE CARPENTER**

Eric Swabey-Keith

## **MASTER ELECTRICIAN**

Konrad Ciolkosz

## **AUDIO ENGINEER**

Zia Fox

## **WARDROBE HEAD/COSTUME TECHNICIAN**

A'lura Celeste-Stewart

\*Appears as a member of the Actors' Equity Association (AEA), the union for professional actors and stage managers.