BUST

An Afrocurrentist Play

By **Zora Howard**  
Directed by **Lileana Blain-Cruz**



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**Welcome**

Categories are great.

Until they’re not.

When talking about a work of theater, it can be useful to identify a genre in which the piece nicely fits. “It’s a comedy.” “It’s a historical tragedy.” And so on. There’s a kind of short handing that goes on, where the person

you’re describing the work to can understand it a bit more quickly by dint of its category. Its label.

But sometimes, a work completely defies that exercise. BUST is one of those.

When I first encountered this work a few years back, I couldn’t for the life of me come up with the right words to describe it. I could tell people what it did to me — that it made me laugh and then gasp and then mourn— and all within a few pages. And pretty quickly, I realized that the most limiting thing I could do to Zora Howard’s theatrical invention was to shoehorn it into some pre-figured box. It was, and it is, resistant to that shoehorning. And that is a large part of its wonder.

Sometimes, we simply need to meet a work on its own terms and let it be our guide to places we haven’ t gone before. Emotionally, aesthetically, theatrically.

Just know this. Because surrendering to that journey pays off handsomely.

**Susan V. Booth**

Artistic Director

**What is Afrocurrentism?**

“If you look it up Afrocurrentism, you won’t find a definition—not yet. It’s a concept I'm still fleshing out, building upon as I work to further articulate BUST’s thematic and formal questions. It positions Black people at the center of the narrative. There’s an interplay between hyperrealism and surrealism—at times it leans into the fantastical, edging even into science-fiction. Naturally, parallels can be drawn to Afrofuturism, but with BUST I am particularly interested in an imaginative practice that can be actualized in the present moment. Rather than envisioning futures in which Black people can and do exist, Afrocurrentism aims to assert our agency in the right now, insisting that we already have access to the knowledge, tools and vision we need to alter our realities as we are most presently living them out."

*-Zora Howard, playwright*

**Q&A with Zora & Lileana**

**By Michen Dewey**

Director Lileana Blain-Cruz and Playwright Zora Howard on the rage, humor and humanity of BUST.

**What was the initial spark behind BUST? Was there a particular moment, event or idea that set the play in motion?**

**ZORA:** In 2013, I wrote a poem in response to the murder of Trayvon Martin. I do not remember much of the writing, but I do remember the rage—how sharp and all-consuming it was. The poem opens with a question: And what will I build with this rage…? *BUST* is an extension of that poem. It asks, 'What if Black people could use the rage that we carry, with which we are in such constant and intimate relationship, for our own constructive and collective gain?' It is an invitation for all of us to consider how we might wield our rage, what we can move with it.

When we don’t acknowledge our rage, it lingers, settles into the body, levies its tax. When we leave it unspoken, when we tuck it away, it does not disappear; it swells. That can be very dangerous, for ourselves and for others. And it can also be very isolating. But the moment we name it—say I am full of rage, I am enraged and this is what is enraging me—you recognize that you are not alone. And there’s power in that recognition—in realizing that there are others wrestling alongside you. *BUST* is about rage, but more so, it is about what it looks like to work through our rage in community. How do we continue to take care of each other in spite of it? That is the practice. That is the radical act.

**How did you come to be involved with *BUST*, and what initially drew you to the piece? What about the play's themes felt particularly resonant to you?**

**LILEANA:** I first came to *BUST* through Zora herself. She told me about this play she was working on around rage. Upon the word RAGE I was intrigued. Hah! She had a first act and we were able to develop it in a workshop during the pandemic. It was a particularly heightened time, and the questions felt essential especially as the problems of the world felt even more exposed. It was exciting to build the world of this family in Alabama but also to explore what happens when we channel that rage into something completely different—potentially life changing in an unexpected way.

**As a director, how did you approach *BUST*? Are there particular visual, tonal or stylistic choices you leaned into to bring the world of the play to life?**

**LILEANA:** Part of the joy of working on *BUST* is that it requires a lot from every single department, so we were able to collectively dream about the many different worlds inside the play. We had an impactful designer lab with the team and that allowed us to really play and imagine how the world could move and also transform in surprising and hopefully emotional ways.

**What do you hope audiences take away from *BUST*? Are there particular emotions, ideas or conversations you hope to spark?**

**ZORA:** That’s a difficult question to answer. All I can hope for is that folks come into the theater open to the play meeting them wherever they are. But if I dare hope a little further, there is a charge in the play—it asks that you imagine a place you want to be and claim that place for yourself. That’s what excites me most about *BUST*; its offering. I hope people walk away reminded of the agency they already possess, the power of their own minds.

**LILEANA:** Yes, in many ways we want the play to meet people where they are, as audiences come in with different histories, different questions—and there are no prescriptions. However, we are aware of the absurdity of living in America right now, we are aware of what it means for Black people to carry a suppressed rage at the conditions they need to face daily, and we are also consistently aware of how humor and joy and music has been a tool of survival. This play contains all of these themes and I’m excited to learn what resonates most for the audience in Chicago.

*Communications Content Manager Michen Dewey is the Managing Editor and Graphic Designer for the Goodman's Playbill.*

**Goodman Theatre**

presents

**BUST**

**AN AFROCURRENTIST PLAY**

By

**Zora Howard**

Directed by

**Lileana Blain-Cruz**

in association with **Sonia Friedman Productions,**

**Khaliah Neal and Thomas Swayne**

Set Design by

**Matt Saunders**

Costume Design by

**Dominique Fawn Hill**

Lighting Design by

**Yi Zhao**

Sound Design by

**Mikaal Sulaiman**

Special Effects Design by

**Jeremy Chernick**

Sonic Dramaturgy by

**DJ Reborn**

Additional Musical Composition by

**Julian Davis Reid**

Fight choreography by

**Rocio Mendez**

Casting by

**Jody Feldman**

**Lauren Port, CSA**

Associate Director

**Malkia Stampley**

Production Stage Manager

**shiku thuo\***

Stage Manager

**Duncan McMillan\***

*BUST* was developed by the Cape Code Theatre Project, Hal Brooks, Artistic Director.

*BUST* was originally developed at Pipeline Theatre Company, Natalie Gershtein, Producing Artistic Director.

*BUST* was developed at the 2021 Ojai Playwrights Conference. Robert Egan, Artistic Director/Producer.

**CAST**

Tomlin/Jack**..................................................Mark Bedard\***

Trent**..........................................................Cecil Blutcher\***

Retta**............................................Caroline Stefanie Clay\***

Zeke**........................................................Bernard Gilbert\***

Ms.Pinto/Newscaster**...........................Caitlin Hargraves\***

Ramirez**.........................................................Jorge Luna\***

Paige**..................................................Victoria Omoregie\***

Mr.Woods**....................................Keith Randolph Smith\***

Reggie**..........................................Ray Anthony Thomas\***

Boobie**...................................................Ivan Cecil Walks\***

Krystal**....................................Renika Williams-Blutcher\***

**UNDERSTUDIES**

US Ms. Pinto/US Newscaster — **Jodi Gage**

US Tomlin/US Jack — **Cory Hardin**

US Retta — **Gabrielle Lott-Rogers\***

US Ramirez — **Vernon Mina**

US Trent/US Zeke/US Boobie — **Patrick Newson Jr.**

US Mr. Woods/US Reggie — **Joseph Primes\***

US Krystal/US Paige — **Jazzy Rush**

*Understudies never substitute for a listed player unless an announcement is made.*

**SETTING:** Huntsville, Alabama and also somewhere else. Now.

Line Producers — **Malkia Stampley, Lena Romano**

Associate Lighting Designer — **Jonah Bobilin**

Associate Special Effects Designer — **Gabrielle Irving**

Assistant Lighting Designer — **Levi J. Wilkins**

Assistant Sound Designer — **Emily Hayman**

Assistant Director — **Raquel Torre**

Voice and Dialect Coach — **Jacqueline Springfield**

Dance Captain — **Ivan Cecil Walks\***

Fight Captain — **Victoria Omoregie\***

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\*Denotes member of Actors‘ Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.

**profiles**

**MARK BEDARD\*** *(Tomlin/Jack)* Chicago: *A Christmas Carol* (Goodman Theatre); *Richard III*, *All’s Well That Ends Well* (Chicago Shakes). Off-Broadway: *Promenade* (City Center); *Julius Caesar* (TFANA); *Pride & Prejudice* (Primary Stages); *A* *Midsummer Night’s Dream* (Pearl Theater); *Fashions for Men* (Mint Theater). Select Regional: Oregon Shakespeare - 9 Seasons; Hudson Valley Shakespeare - 4 seasons; *Into the Woods*, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (Idaho Shakes); *Little Shop of Horrors* (Idaho & Tahoe Shakes); *The Cocoanuts* (Guthrie); *Roe* (Arena Stage, Berkeley Rep); *Funny Thing…Forum* (Geva Theatre); *Cymbeline* (Shakespeare Theatre Company); *Boeing Boeing* (Seattle Repertory); *Waiting for Godot* (Marin Theatre). TV/Film: *The Gilded Age*; *Evil*; *Madam Secretary*; *The Good Fight*; *Instinct*; *The Knick*. markbedard.com

**CECIL BLUTCHER\***, he/him/they *(Trent)* is thrilled to join the cast of *BUST* for his first production at Goodman Theatre! As an actor, he has worked in every medium (film, TV and theater); but his most important credit is *Child of God*. He holds an MFA from Penn State and is also an avid writer and musician. Find him online: @cecilcreates and Cecilblutchercreates.com. His participation in this production is dedicated to the memory of his Father: David Anthony Blutcher. Rest in Supreme Power.

**CAROLINE STEFANIE CLAY\***, she/her *(Retta)* *Oo-Bla-Dee* (Goodman Theatre); *Desire Under the Elms* (Court Theatre; Broadway); *The Little Foxes*, *Doubt*, *Doubt: National Tour*, *The Royal Family*, *Drowning Crow*, *Come Back Little Sheba*. Regional: Yale Rep, Arena Stage, Shakespeare Theatre and Geffen Playhouse, where she was awarded the 2018 NAACP Award, LA for Best Performance by an Actor in *Skeleton Crew*. TV: *Law & Order SVU*, *All My Children*, *House of Cards*, *The Knick*, *Shameless*, *Grey’s Anatomy*. Voice and Dialect: *The Fire Inside*. Clay is an Assistant Professor of Acting at University of Iowa, Department of Theatre Arts, and will soon become a Designated Linklater Voice Teacher.

**JODI GAGE**, she/her *(US Ms. Pinto/US Newscaster)* *Coronation* (Refracted); *Romeo & Juliet* (Oak Park Festival); *Inanimate* (Theater Wit); *Night Watch* (Raven Theatre); *The Writer* (Steep Theatre); *Merrily We Roll Along* (Blank Theatre); *Next to Normal* (Dunes Summer Theater); *Falsettos* (US, Court & Timeline); *Richard III*, *Judgment Day* (US, Chicago Shakespeare Theater); A *Christmas Carol* (Pittsburgh CLO); *Lady Windermere's Fan* (PICT Classic Theatre); *[title of show]* (Company of Pittsburgh); *As You Like It* (US Milwaukee Rep). She toured internationally in *Song of Home* (Theatre Lumina). TV credits: *Chicago Med*. Jodigage.com

**BERNARD GILBERT\*** *(Zeke)* is thrilled to return to Goodman Theatre! Raised in Atlanta, he holds a Business degree from Morehouse College and an MFA in Acting from The Theatre School at DePaul University. His TV credits include *The Chi*, *Empire* and *Utopia*, with guest spots on *Law & Order*, *Chicago P.D.* and *The Big Leap*. Bernard has performed at Alliance Theatre, A Red Orchid Theatre, and more. Notable roles include Hero (*Father Comes Home from the Wars*) and Herald Loomis (*Joe Turner’s Come and Gone*). A Princess Grace Award winner, he thanks his wife, Alicia, friends and family.

**CORY HARDIN** *(US Tomlin/US Jack)* makes his Goodman Theatre debut. Chicago credits: *Hamlet* (The Gift Theater); *The Cheats* (Steep Theater); and *The New Sincerity* (Theater Wit). He produces and performs in *Voila! The Improvised Musical* (The iO Theater) where he’s also a house team member. Regional credits: StageOne, The National Theater for Children. Film & Television: *Shirley, Mea Culpa* (Netflix); *Bird of Paradise* (NFFTY Film Fest Jury Award Nominee); and *Chicago Fire* (NBC).

**CAITLIN HARGRAVES\***, she/her *(Ms. Pinto/Newscaster)* Atlanta credits include *A Christmas Carol* (Alliance Theatre); *Pitman Painters* (Theatrical Outfit); and *Edward Tulane* (Synchronicity Theater). Select regional credits include *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Man of La Mancha* (Texas Shakespeare Festival); and *The Two Musketeers* (Hippodrome Theater). Film credits include *Mi Casa* (HBO); *Give Me an A* (XYZ Films); and *Average Joe* (NBC). Caitlin is an acting professor at Emory University where she also serves as Artistic Director of Theater Emory. BFA: Tisch at NYU, MA: LAMDA.

**GABRIELLE LOTT-ROGERS\*** *(US Retta)* is beyond thrilled to return to Goodman Theatre! Chicago credits include: *The Nacirema Society* (Goodman Theatre); *1776* (Marriott); *The Most Spectacularly Lamentable Trial of Miz Martha Washington*, *Downstate* (Steppenwolf); *Boulevard of Bold Dreams* (TimeLine). Regional credits: *Nina Simone: Four Women* (KC Rep/Milwaukee Rep.). TV/ FILM credits include: *The Emperor of Ocean Park*, *Proven Innocent*, *Chicago P.D.*, *The Chi*, *Empire*, *Southside with You* and several commercials. Gabrielle is a proud member of AEA and SAG-AFTRA and is represented by DDO Artists Agency-Chicago.

**JORGE LUNA\*** *(Ramirez)* is an actor, photographer, filmmaker, and writer from San Juan, Puerto Rico. Off-Broadway/NYC Theatre: *Breaking the Story* (2nd Stage); *Deathwatch* (Drama League/New Ohio); FLORIDITA, my Love (IATI); *Hamlet* (JCTC); *by wing, fin, hoof or foot* (The Ume Group); *Cymbeline* (Chashama). Regional: *Dracula: A Comedy of Terrors* (Irish Classical Theatre); *Baipás* (George Street Playhouse); *Constellations* (GLT). Film: *The Week Of* (Netflix), *planet b234* (Vail), *All the Beautiful Things* (Sundance). TV: *Zero Day* (Netflix), *Law & Order*, *Law & Order: SVU* (NBC), *Elementary* (CBS), *The Blacklist* (NBC). UPR- BA Theatre; RADA- Shakespeare; Brooklyn College- MFA, Acting. @jorgelunadj

**VERNON MINA**, he/him *(US Ramirez)* Honduran born and Chicago raised, Vernon is an actor, writer and improviser based in Chicago. He is excited and grateful to be back at the Goodman. He is an ABC/Disney Discovers talent, a Second City National Touring alum, wrote a solo show: *Solo Yo* and an NBC Bob Curry Fellow. He sends a special thanks to his wife, son and family for their support. @vernonmeenah Rep: Grossman & Jack Talent - Infin8 Artists & Entertainment.

**PATRICK NEWSON JR.** *(US Trent/US Zeke/US Boobie)* is a Chicago born, Jeff Award-winning actor. Chicago credits include: *Tambo & Bones* (Refracted Theater); *Alaiyo* (Definition Theater); *East Texas Hot Links* (Court Theater); *The October Storm* (Raven Theater); *The Singularity Play* (Jackalope Theater); Second City e.t.c 48th revue (Second City). TV/Film credits include: *Liz Here Now*; *The Chicago Code* (FOX); *Chicago Fire/Chicago Med* (NBC); *Shining Girls* (Apple TV+); *The Chi* (SHOWTIME); *South Side* (HBO MAX) and more. Gray Talent.

**VICTORIA OMOREGIE\***, she/her *(Paige)* is ecstatic to make her Goodman Theatre debut! Her selected credits include: *Fat Ham* (Alliance Theatre); *John Proctor Is The Villain*, *Fat Ham* (The Huntington Theatre); *acts of faith* (American Stage); *Fairview* (SpeakEasy Stage Company) (Thomas Derrah Award winning performance); *The Bomb-Itty of Errors*, *The Winter's Tale* (Actors' Shakespeare Project); *LORENA: A Tabloid Epic* (Boston Playwrights Theatre). She holds a BFA in Acting from Boston University School of Theatre.

**JOSEPH PRIMES\*** *(US Mr. Woods/US Reggie)* is a Cleveland, Ohio native who now resides in Chicago. He attended Texas Tech University and Howard University. Primes spent years as an activist and mentor before becoming an educator in the Euclid and East Cleveland school district. As a performance poet, he appeared with Vince Robinson and the jazz poets and the underground Hip Hop group, Chop Shop. Theater credits include works at Cleveland’s Public Theatre, Karamu, Ensemble, Great Lakes and more. An award-winning actor and producer, Primes produced the film *#50 Fathers* and the web series *Seeing Tomorrow*. He has worked at Steppenwolf, Court Theatre, Definition Theatre and Indiana Repertory Theatre. Television credits include *Chicago PD*. He is a member of SAG-AFTRA and AEA.

**JAZZY RUSH**, she/her *(US Krystal/US Paige)* Chicago: *Fat Ham* (Goodman Theatre); *STEW* (Shattered Globe Theatre). Regional: *As You Like it*, *Twelfth Night* (St. Louis Shakespeare Festival); *JAYSON, IVANOV* (The Exodus Ensemble); *School Girls; or, The African Mean Girls Play* (Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park); *King Lear* (Shakespeare & Company). BFA Acting DePaul University. Jazzy is represented by Gray Talent Group. You can find her on all social media platforms @JazzyCheri.

**KEITH RANDOLPH SMITH\*** *(Mr. Woods)* *Blues for an Alabama Sky*, *King Hedley II*, *God of Carnage*, *The C. A. Lyons Project* and *The Whipping Man* (Alliance Theatre). Broadway: *Jitney*, *King Hedley II*, *Fences*, *The Piano Lesson*, *American Psycho*, *Come Back Little Sheba* and *Salome*. Recent credits: *…what the end will be* (Roundabout Theater); *Paradise Blue* (Signature Theater); *Wine in the Wilderness* (Two River Theater). Film/TV/video games: *Malcolm X* and *Girl Six*; *The Good Fight*; *Grand Theft Auto V* and *Grand Theft*: *The Lost and Damned*. Keith was awarded the TCG/Fox Fellowship in Acting and he is also a member of Quicksilver Theater Company (QSTC) and the Actors Center. Keith trained at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York.

**RAY ANTHONY THOMAS\*** *(Reggie)* is a member of The Atlantic Theater Company in NYC and has appeared in *Between Riverside and Crazy* (premiere, Pulitzer Prize), *Distant Fires*, *Edmond* and *The Exonerated*. Broadway: *I Need That* (Danny DeVito), *American Buffalo* (Sam Rockwell, Darren Criss), *Trouble in Mind* (La Chanze), *The Crucible*, *Race* (Mamet) and *Jitney* (National Tour). Ray has also appeared in *Water by the Spoonful* (Pulitzer Prize), creating the role of ‘Chutes&Ladders.’ Ray is a Wilsonian Warrior, recognized for all his work in the canon of August Wilson. Film and TV: *American Fiction*, *The Harbinger*, *Isn't It Romantic*, *Shutter Island*, *Trouble with the Curve*, *Flatbush Misdemeanors*, *High Maintenance* (HBO); *Law & Order*, *New Amsterdam* (NBC); *The Last O.G.*

**IVAN CECIL WALKS\***, he/him *(Boobie)* is honored to join the cast of *BUST*, and make his Goodman Theatre debut! Recent credits include: an Elliot Norton Award-winning performance in *K-I-S-S-I-N-G* (Huntington Theatre); an Elliot Norton Award-nominated performance in *Passing Strange* (Moonbox Productions); *The Winter’s Tale* (Actors’ Shakespeare Project); *Laure* (NY Theatre Workshop); *Oklahoma!* (Act Two @ Levine). He made his film debut last year in the Hallmark Original movie *A Very Vermont Christmas!* He holds a BFA in Acting from Boston University’s School of Theatre. He also co-creates and choreographs music videos under the artist name “I.V.A.N.”

**RENIKA WILLIAMS-BLUTCHER\***, she/her *(Krystal)* is very excited to be joining the cast of *BUST* in her Goodman Theatre debut! Off-Broadway credits: *All the Natalie Portmans* (MCC Theater); *The Climb* (The Cherry Lane Theatre); *Sweet* (National Black Theatre). Select regional credits include: *Pipeline* (Actors Theatre of Louisville & Indiana Repertory Theatre); *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Antigone* (Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park); *A Raisin in the Sun* (Cincinnati Shakespeare Co.); *The Bluest Eye* (The Arden Theatre). TV/Film: *The Sex Lives of College Girls*, *New Amsterdam*, *P Valley* and *The Fabulous Four*. She earned her BFA in Acting from Wright State University in her hometown Dayton, OH.

**ZORA HOWARD** *(Playwright)* is a writer and director. Plays include *STEW* (2021 Pulitzer Prize Finalist; P73 Productions), *THE MASTER’S TOOLS* (Wiener Festwochen; WTF), *HANG TIME* (The Flea), *THE MOTIONS* and *GOOD FAITH*. Her work has been developed at Ojai Playwrights Conference, Stillwright, Mercury Store, and Cape Cod Theatre Project, among others. In 2020, her feature film *Premature*, which she co-wrote with director Rashaad Ernesto Green, opened in theaters following its world premiere at the 2019 Sundance Film Festival. Zora is a Lilly Award and Helen Merrill Award recipient, a former MTC Judith Champion Fellow and Lark Van Lier New Voices Fellow and alumna of the P73 I-73 Writers Group. She is currently under commission from Seattle Rep and Chautauqua Theatre Company. zoramakes.com. For Julie Renee Butler, my mama; you are my Elsewhere.

**LILEANA BLAIN-CRUZ** *(Director)* is a resident director of Lincoln Center Theater; she received the Drama League’s 2022 Founders Award for Excellence in Directing, and was named a 2021 Doris Duke Artist, a 2020 Lincoln Center Emerging Artist, and a 2018 United States Artists Fellow. Recent projects include: *El Niño* (Metropolitan Opera);*The Skin of Our Teeth* (Tony nomination), *The Blood Quilt*, *Flex* and *Pipeline* (LCT); *Marys Seacole* (Obie Award, LCT3); *Stranger Love* (LA Philharmonic); *Create Dangerously* (Miami New Drama); *White Girl in Danger* (Vineyard / Second Stage); *The Listeners* (Opera Norway / Opera Philadelphia); *Dreaming Zenzile* (NYTW / NBT); *Wayne Shorter and esperanza spalding’s …*(Iphigenia) (MASS MoCA / The Kennedy Center); *Hansel and Gretel* (a film for Houston Grand Opera); *Anatomy of a Suicide* (Atlantic Theater Company); *Fefu and Her Friends* (TFANA); *The Death of the Last Black Man in the Whole Entire World* (Obie Award) and *Fabulation* (Signature Theatre); *Thunderbodies* and *Revolt*. *She Said. Revolt Again.* (Soho Rep). Upcoming: *Purple Rain*.

**MATT SAUNDERS**, he/him *(Scenic Designer)* Recent Off-Broadway: *Jordans* (Public); *FLEX* (Lincoln Center, Audelco Award); *Catch As Catch Can* (Playwright’s Horizons); *Daddy* (New Group & Vineyard, Drama Desk Award); *Pipeline* (Lincoln Center); *Venus* (Signature); *Futurity* (Soho Rep and Ars Nova); *The Good Person of Szechwan* (Foundry & Public). Over 100 regional credits including: Guthrie, Mark Taper Forum, Berkeley Rep, Yale Rep, Wilma Theater and Kennedy Center. Training: MFA, Yale School of Drama. Saunders is a Pew Fellow and a Hodder Fellow, Princeton University. Associate Professor, Swarthmore College. [www.mattsaunders.net](https://www.mattsaunders.net)

**DOMINIQUE FAWN HILL**, she/her *(Costume Designer)* designs include Broadway: *Fat Ham* (Tony Award nomination). Off-Broadway: *Tambo & Bones* (Playwrights Horizons-Lucille Lortel nomination); *Fat Ham* (Public Theatre-Obie Award); *Where the Mountain Meets the Sea* (Manhattan Theatre Club); *Hang Time* (The Flea); *The Dark Girl Chronicles* (The Shed); *125th & FREEdom* (National Black Theatre). Regional credits: *Derecho* (The La Jolla Playhouse); *Primary Trust* (Alley Theatre); *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, *Choir Boy*, and *Rent* (Portland Center Stage). Dominique is currently designing across the nation while being an adjunct lecturer at The University of California, Berkeley. You can find her work at DominiqueFHill.com

**YI ZHAO** *(Lighting Designer)* Goodman Theatre: *Life After*. Broadway: *Purple Rain* (upcoming), *I Need That*, *The Skin of Our Teeth* (Tony nomination). New York: Lincoln Center Theater, Signature Theatre, NYTW, Soho Rep, Manhattan Theatre Club. Regional: Guthrie Theater, Yale Repertory Theatre, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Shakespeare Theatre, Mark Taper Forum, Dallas Theater Center, Wilma Theater, A.C.T., Berkeley Rep, Shakespeare Theatre Company. Opera: Metropolitan Opera, Norwegian National Opera, Chicago Lyric Opera, Opera Philadelphia, Opera Colorado, Detroit Opera, Opera Omaha. [www.yi-zhao.com](https://www.yi-zhao.com)

**JEREMY CHERNICK** *(Special Effects Designer)* has worked on over 50 Broadway productions. Highlights include *Sweeney Todd*, *The Outsiders*, *Beetlejuice* and *Hadestown*. Jeremy has worked with the Disney Theatrical Group creating effects for *Hercules*, *Frozen*, *Aladdin*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and *Tarzan*. In London’s West End, Jeremy designed *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* and *Let the Right One In*. Jeremy’s work has been featured in prominent performing and visual arts institutions across the United States and the globe. Jeremy serves as head designer for J&M Special Effects in Brooklyn. www.jmfx.net. [www.jeremychernickdesigns.com](https://www.jeremychernickdesigns.com)

**MIKAAL SULAIMAN** *(Sound Design)* A Tony award-nominated multi-disciplinary artist working in film, TV and theater as a writer, director, sound designer and composer. Notable Broadway productions: *The Roommate*, *An Enemy of the People*, *Doubt*, *Death of a Salesman*, among others. Original sound design on *Primary Trust* (Pulitzer Prize for Drama), *Fat Ham* (Pulitzer Prize for Drama) and *Fairview* (Pulitzer Prize for Drama). Nominations: Tony, Drama Desk and Lucille Lortel Awards. Winning: Obie Awards, Theatre Bay Area Award, Creative Capital Award, Henry Hewes Design Awards, an Audelco Award and the CTG Sherwood Award. [www.mikaal.com](https://www.mikaal.com)

**DJ REBORN** *(Sonic Dramaturgy)* is a trailblazing international DJ, sound collage artist and arts educator. She is the resident DJ for the iconic Ms. Lauryn Hill’s world tour, and the founder of DJs for Justice, a coalition of DJs using their platforms in service of racial, social and economic justice. She is currently developing an international performance piece archiving the stories of women in the DJ world. Chicago born and NYC based.

**JULIAN DAVIS REID** (*Additional Musical Composition*) is a pianist and composer. His ensemble, Circle of Trust, blends jazz, gospel and soul. For this recording, the group comprised Tramaine Parker (vocals), Nick Peterson (vocals), Lenard Simpson (sax), Micah Collier (bass), and James Russell Sims (drums). Julian draws from Herbie Hancock, Richard Smallwood, Andraé Crouch, Ahmad Jamal, McCoy Tyner, Robert Glasper and the Taize community. Outside of Circle, Julian creates with his other jazz group The JuJu Exchange and ministers through his musical-contemplative experience Notes of Rest. He has performed and/or recorded with Jennifer Hudson, Andrew Bird, Chance the Rapper, Tank and the Bangas, Jamila Woods, Keyon Harrold and Isaiah Collier. Julian studied philosophy at Yale (B.A.) and theology and the arts at Candler School of Theology at Emory (M.Div.).

**ROCIO MENDEZ** (*Fight Choreography*) was recently nominated for two Drama Desk Awards and is the resident Intimacy Director at Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Broadway credits include: *POTUS*, *AIN’T NO MO*, *Merrily We Roll Along*, *The Great Gatsby*. Off-Broadway/Regional credits include: *Gatsby* (A.R.T); *How to Defend Yourself*, *On Sugarland* (NYTW); *The Bandaged Place* (Roundabout); *The Harder They Come*, *Merry Wives*, *Romeo y Julieta* (Public Theater); *NIOR* (The Alley Theater); *Vietgone*, *The Royale* (Geva Theater Center). www.rociomendez.com

**JODY FELDMAN** (*Casting*) started her career at the Alliance as casting director in 1991 and added producer to her title and responsibilities in 2001. She has cast and produced more than 250 productions at the Alliance, encompassing a range of world premieres that include *The Last Night of Ballyhoo*, *Blues for An Alabama Sky*, *The Geller Girls*, *In the Red and Brown Water*, more than 20 years of Alliance/Kendeda National Graduate Playwriting Competition-winning plays, such world and regional premiere musicals as *Aida*; *The Color Purple*; *Sister Act: The Musical*; *Bring It On: The Musical*; *Tuck Everlasting*; *Ghost Brothers of Darkland County*; *Harmony, A New Musical*; *The Prom*; *Trading Places*, and exciting new plays developed for children and families. Jody is most proud of the thriving Alliance community engagement and partnerships that recognize theatrical work as a catalyst for civic conversation and connection.

**LAUREN PORT** (*Casting*) joined the Goodman as Casting Director in August of 2019 after eleven years casting in NYC, where she worked on many Goodman productions over the years, including *Father Comes Home from the Wars, Parts 1, 2 and 3*, *Uncle Vanya*, *The Sign in Sidney Brustein’s Window*, *Disgraced* and *Sweet Bird of Youth*. Broadway highlights: *Junk*; *Meteor Shower*; *A Doll’s House Part 2*; *The Front Page*; *It’s Only a Play*; *Disgraced*; *Fish in the Dark*; *The Trip to Bountiful*; *Grace*; *Death of a Salesman*; *Seminar*; *Stick Fly*; *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo*; *Lend Me a Tenor* and *Fences*. Television/Film includes: *New Amsterdam* (NBC); *American Odyssey* (NBC) and *Steel Magnolias* (Sony for Lifetime). Lauren is a five-time Artios Award winner, a recipient of the 40th Annual Media Access Awards and a proud member of the Casting Society of America.

**MALKIA STAMPLEY**, she/her (*Associate Director*) is a Milwaukee native and the Goodman’s BOLD Artistic Producer. Directing credits: *Nunsense* and *Nina Simone: Four Women* (Milwaukee Rep, KC Rep); *The October Storm* (Raven, Jeff-nominated Best Director); *Boulevard of Bold Dreams* (TimeLine); *STEW* (Shattered Globe, Milwaukee Chamber); *Black Nativity* (Black Arts MKE); *The Gift of the Magi* (American Players); *Five Guys Named Moe* (Skylight Music); *Lady Day at Emerson’s Bar and Grille* (Farmers Alley); *Exit Strategy* (Northwestern). She is an Ensemble Member of Congo Square.

**SHIKU THUO\***, she/they (*Production Stage Manager*) is a stage manager, actor and director hailing from Southern California, but taking residency in New York. Their most recent works include: *Table 17* (MCC); *Sunset Baby* (Signature Theater); *Fabulation, or the Re-Education of Undine* (Billie Holiday); *The Whitney Album* (Soho Rep); *‘Bov Water* (Northern Stage); *On that Day in Amsterdam* (Primary Stages); *Life of Pi* (Broadway); *Thoughts of a Colored Man* (Broadway).

**DUNCAN MCMILLAN\***, he/him (*Stage Manager*) is proud to return to Goodman Theatre, where his previous credits include *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *The Penelopiad*, *A Christmas Carol* (2023, 2024) and *The Nacirema Society*.

Founded in 1968, the **ALLIANCE THEATRE** is the leading producing theater in the Southeast, reaching more than 165,000 patrons annually. The Alliance is led by Jennings Hertz Artistic Directors Tinashe Kajese-Bolden and Christopher Moses and Managing Director Mike Schleifer. The Alliance is a recipient of the Regional Theatre Tony Award® for sustained excellence in programming, education and community engagement. In January 2019, the Alliance opened its new, state of-the-art performance space, The Coca-Cola Stage at Alliance Theatre. Known for its high artistic standards and national role in creating significant theatrical works, the Alliance has premiered more than 135 productions, including 11 that have transferred to Broadway. The Alliance education department reaches 90,000 students annually through performances, classes, camps and in-school initiatives designed to support teachers and enhance student learning. The Alliance Theatre values community, curiosity, collaboration and excellence, and is dedicated to representing Atlanta’s diverse community with the stories we tell, the artists, staff, and leadership we employ and audiences we serve.

**SUSAN V. BOOTH** (*Goodman Theatre Walter Artistic Director*) joined Goodman Theatre in the fall of 2022, having previously served as Artistic Director of Atlanta’s Tony Award-winning Alliance Theatre, premiering new work that went on to national, international and commercial life. She has directed at the Goodman, Hartford Stage, Ford's Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, St. Louis Repertory Theatre, Cincinnati Playhouse, New York Stage and Film, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Northlight Theatre, Victory Gardens, Court Theatre and others. She has held teaching positions at Northwestern, DePaul and Emory Universities. She is past president of the Board of Directors for the Theatre Communications Group, the national service organization for the field and a 2024 Leadership Greater Chicago Daniel Burnham Fellow.

**JOHN COLLINS** (*Goodman Theatre Executive Director*) began his career with a summer internship at the Goodman, where he has since served in various senior leadership positions over the past two decades. During his tenure, Collins has overseen numerous production transfers to Broadway, regional and international venues and tours of Goodman productions, including *The Who’s TOMMY*; *Good Night, Oscar*; *War Paint*; *Desire Under the Elms*; and *Chinglish* (Broadway); *The Iceman Cometh* (New York/BAM); *The White Snake* (China); and *Luna Gale* (Los Angeles). He also helped open the Alice Rapoport Center for Education and Engagement—a 10,000 square foot center for expanded programming and activities. Collins is a past Chairman and current board member of the League of Chicago Theaters, and a board member of the Chicago Loop Alliance and the League of Resident Theatres (LORT). He is a graduate of Marquette University and resides in Chicago with his wife Melissa and their children, Shea and Evan.

**NOTE:** Bios are current as of April 3, 2025. Full bios also appear online at **GoodmanTheatre.org/BUST**

**about us**

*AMERICA’S “BEST REGIONAL THEATRE”* (*Time magazine*), the Goodman is a premier not for-profit organization distinguished by the excellence and scope of its artistic programming and civic engagement. Led by Walter Artistic Director Susan V. Booth and Executive Director John Collins and committed to core values of Quality, Diversity and Community, the Goodman makes inclusion the fabric of the organization through its artistic priorities—including new play development, large scale musical theater works and reimagined classics. Distinctions include two Pulitzer Prizes, 22 Tony Awards and nearly 200 Jeff Awards. The Goodman was first to produce all 10 plays in August Wilson’s “American Century Cycle,” and its annual *A Christmas Carol*, now in its fifth decade, has created a new generation of theatergoers. The Goodman also serves as a production partner with local, national and international companies.

Our nationally recognized Education and Engagement programs use the tools of our profession to inspire youth, lifelong learners and audiences to find and/or enhance their voices, stories and abilities. The Alice Rapoport Center for Education and Engagement (est. 2016) is the home of such programming, most offered free of charge, and has vastly expanded the theater’s ability to serve our city (with 85% of youth participants from underserved communities).

Goodman Theatre was founded by William O. Goodman and family in honor of their son, Kenneth, a figure in Chicago’s early 1900s cultural renaissance. The family’s legacy endures through Albert Ivar Goodman who, with his late mother, Edith-Marie Appleton, contributed the funds for the new Goodman center in 2000. Today, Goodman leadership also includes Julie Danis as Chairman of Goodman Theatre’s Board of Trustees, Lorrayne Weiss as the Women’s Board President and Kelli Garcia as President of the Scenemakers Board for young professionals.

Goodman Theatre was built on the traditional homelands of the Council of the Three Fires: the Ojibwe, Odawa and Potawatomi Nations. We recognize that many other Nations consider the area we now call Chicago as their traditional homeland—including the Myaamia, Ho-Chunk, Menominee, Sac and Fox, Peoria, Kaskaskia, Wea, Kickapoo and Mascouten—and remains home to many Native peoples today. While we believe that our city’s vast diversity should be reflected on the stages of its largest theater, we acknowledge that our efforts have largely overlooked the voices of our Native peoples. This omission has added to the isolation, erasure and harm that Indigenous communities have faced for hundreds of years. We have begun a more deliberate journey towards celebrating Native American stories and welcoming Indigenous communities; learn more at **GoodmanTheatre.org/Accountability**.

**accessible & enhanced performances**

**Audio-Described Performance and Touch Tour:** May 10 at 12:30pm, Touch Tour at 2:00pm

**American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreted Performance:** May 9 at 7:30pm

**Open-Captioned Performance:** May 11 at 2pm

**Spanish Subtitles Performance:** May 10 at 7:30pm