



SCHOOL OF
 THEATRE, DANCE, &
 PERFORMANCE STUDIES

November 1-9, 2019 KOGOD THEATRE at The Clarice

THEATRE DANCE

SCHOOL OF THEATRE, DANCE, AND PERFORMANCE STUDIES Leigh Wilson Smiley, *Producing Director*

FLYIN' WEST

by Pearl Cleage

FLYIN' WEST was originally commissioned and produced by the Alliance Theatre Company, Atlanta, Georgia, Kenny Leon, Artistic Director and Edith Love, Managing Director, in association with AT&T: On Stage. The play was developed with support from the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund Resident Theatre Initiative.

Directors	Scot Reese and Alvin Mayes
Scenic Designer	Jack Golden
Costume Designer	Channing Tucker
Lighting Designer	Michael Winston
Sound Designer	Justin Schmitz
Fight Director	Michael Jerome Johnson
Dramaturg	Jordan Ealey
Stage Manager	Maria De Barros

NOVEMBER 1-9, 2019

KOGOD THEATRE

This performance will last approximately 2 hours with a 15-minute intermission

The sound designer in this production is represented by United Scenic Artists, Local USA-829 of the IATSE.

UNITED

SCENIC

ARTISTS



This production uses the Artist Engagement Services of the University Resident Theatre Association.

VIDEO OR AUDIO RECORDING OF THIS PRODUCTION IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED.

THE VISIT

by Friedrich Dürrenmatt Translated by Maurice Valency Brian MacDevitt, director Leigh Wilson Smiley, acting coach Kendra Portier, choreographer KAY THEATRE **SEPTEMBER 28-OCTOBER 5, 2019**

FLYIN' WEST

by Pearl Cleage Scot Reese and Alvin Mayes, directors KOGOD THEATRE **NOVEMBER 1-9, 2019**

A DOLL HOUSE

by Henrik Ibsen Kathryn Chase Bryer, director KOGOD THEATRE **FEBRUARY 7-15, 2020**

NOISES OFF

by Michael Frayn Lisa Nathans, director KAY THEATRE **FEBRUARY 21-29, 2020**

SHE KILLS MONSTERS

by Qui Nguyen Rachel Grossman, director KOGOD THEATRE **MAY 2-9, 2020** MFA DANCE THESIS CONCERT

Black Madonna and Miss America by Ronya-Lee Anderson *Corpora Caelestia: A Movement Opera* by Heidi McFall KOGOD THEATRE **OCTOBER 4-6, 2019**

MADDEN DANCE PROJECT

untitled sad piece by Heidi Henderson, elephant JANE dance Burnish (Magenta #08) by Kendra Portier, BANDportier DANCE THEATRE **NOVEMBER 15-17, 2019**

UMOVES: UNDERGRADUATE DANCE CONCERT Kendra Portier, director DANCE THEATRE MAY 8-10, 2020

Sophie Washington	Miranda Hall
Miss Leah	Des'ree Brown*/Gislaine Hoyah**
Fannie Dove	Gabrielle Allen
Will Parrish	Elijah Williams
Minnie Dove Charles	Aliyah Jackson
Frank Charles	Kyle Starling

Second Cast

Sophie Washington	Yani Hill
Miss Leah	
Fannie Dove	Taylor Thomas
Will Parrish	Aaron Ward
Minnie Dove Charles	Leilani Clendenin
Frank Charles	Isabella Benning

All roles will be performed by the Second Cast for the student matinee performance on November 8.

Time and Setting Fall, 1898

Outside the all-black town of Nicodemus, Kansas

*The role of Miss Leah will be played by Des'ree Brown for the following performances: Friday, November 1 Sunday, November 3 at 2:00pm Thursday, November 7 Friday, November 8

**The role of Miss Leah will be played by Gislaine Hoyah for the following performances:
Sunday, November 3 at 7:30pm
Wednesday, November 6
Saturday, November 9 at 2:00pm and 7:30pm

"It is with profound sadness we share that, following a short illness, our adored mother and grandmother, Toni Morrison, passed away peacefully last night surrounded by family and friends," shared the Morrison family in a statement. "She was an extremely devoted mother, grandmother and aunt who reveled in being with her family and friends. The consummate writer who treasured the written word, whether her own, her students or others, she read voraciously and was most at home when writing. Although her passing represents a tremendous loss, we are grateful she had a long, well lived life."

In 1993, Morrison became the first African American to be awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature. "Toni Morrison's brilliant vision, inspired creativity, and unique voice have reshaped American culture and the world's literary tradition," said Princeton President Christopher L. Eisgruber. "Her magnificent works will continue to light a path forward for generations of readers and authors.

In honor of Morrison's career achievements and contributions, we dedicate *Flyin' West* to her memory.

THE UNAPOLOGETIC BLACKNESS OF PEARL CLEAGE

In a 1981 interview with *The New Republic*, the celebrated writer Toni Morrison was questioned about why she writes about Black people. Morrison quickly remarked: "Behind this question is the suggestion that to write for Black people is somehow to diminish the writing. From my perspective there are only Black people. When I say 'people,' that's what I mean." This sentiment can be seen in the worlds that Morrison created, worlds where she afforded Black people, especially Black women, multidimensional, nuanced, and layered experiences that displayed their humanity. In other words, Morrison was "unapologetically Black" before the phrase became a ubiquitous slogan.

The same could be said about the playwright, novelist, and essayist Pearl Cleage. Similar to Morrison, Cleage's work centers the lives of Black people in all of their beauty and in all of their pain. As she celebrates African American history and culture, Cleage always takes care to feature Black women as central players in her work, and *Flyin' West* is no exception. Set in the all-Black town of Nicodemus, Kansas, the play is a story of Black people in the West, a reclamation of a narrative that often excludes them. A self-proclaimed "African American Urban Nationalist Warrior Woman," Pearl Cleage also stages the complexities of Black womanhood in this play, as evidenced in the sisterhood of Sophie, Fannie, Miss Leah, and Minnie. These female characters care for one another unconditionally, protecting and uplifting each other while holding one another accountable. Cleage's Black feminist (re)vision of African American history privileges Black women as essential and active agents of Black life, imploring us all to remember and give reverence to their contributions to history.

Pearl Cleage's representations of unapologetic blackness revel in the richness of Black culture without dismissing its problems. Although *Flyin' West* is set in an all-Black town, that does not mean that it is utopic; in fact, Cleage does not shy away from staging the intra-racial issues that still plague the Black community. Instead, Cleage reveals how patriarchy is embedded in this all-Black town and how it sometimes results in violence against Black women. And while there are no white characters in *Flyin' West*, Cleage still acknowledges how white supremacy has affected the lives of the Black citizens of Nicodemus. After all, the characters in this play are not that far removed from the institution of slavery, a fact we are constantly reminded of by Miss Leah. And finally, as Nicodemus faces the threat of white infiltration, we can still feel those reverberations in our modern moment as gentrification threatens to displace Black people all over America, including right here in the DMV. As a griot of the African American experience, Cleage's important role as storyteller becomes most evident in one of the last lines of the play. When Miss Leah whispers to her granddaughter: "All those fine colored women, makin' a place for you. And I'm gonna tell you all about them," Cleage reminds us of how crucial storytelling is for African American communities, whether through Fannie's insistence on writing them down or Miss Leah's knack for oral history. Cleage does not, like the women in the play, take her role lightly. If *Flyin' West* is any indication, Pearl Cleage has been "makin' a place" for Black people in theatre for her entire career. Because like Morrison, when she says "people," that's what she means.

"The function of freedom is to free someone else." - Toni Morrison

--Jordan Ealey, dramaturg

Gabrielle Allen (Fannie) junior theatre performance major. UMD credits: *The Heidi Chronicles* (Susan u/s), Fearless New Play Festival 2018 and 2019. Outside credits: *Fiddler on the Roof* (Golde), *Father of the Bride* (Ms. Bellamy), *Hello Dolly* (ensemble).

Maria De Barros (stage manager) junior theatre major. Creative and Performing Arts Scholar. Kreativity Diversity Troupe stage manager. UMD selected credits: Hamlet Replayed, Citizen: An American Lyric (assistant stage manager), Shared Graduate Dance Concert 2019 (stage manager). Selected outside credits: Into the Woods, Gertrude and Claudius, Fall Springs (Barrington Stage Company); Mamma Mia!, Sister Act (Maltz Jupiter Theatre).

Isabella Benning (Frank - Second Cast) sophomore theatre and criminal justice major. Outside credits: *Troilus and Cressida* (Cressida), *Once Upon A Mattress* (Lady Larken), *25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (Olive).

Des'ree Brown (Miss Leah) senior theatre major and arts leadership minor. UMD credits: *Citizen: An American Lyric* (Citizen #2), *Hamlet Replayed* (Ophelia), Big 10 New Play Workshop: *The Twilight Bowl* (Maddy), *The Measure of Our Lives* (Alice Dunbar-Nelson). The Muses founder and artistic director. Kreativity Diversity Troupe member.

Leilani Clendenin (Minnie - Second Cast) first-year theatre and second-year voice major. Robert H. Smith Music Scholarship and Suzanne Beicken Memorial Scholarship recipient. National Society of Leadership and Success member. Outside credits: *Mama Anacostia* (Prince George's Children's Theater).

J. Mitchell Cronin (assistant lighting designer) first-year MFA candidate in lighting design. Mitchell has designed over 100 fully produced productions with theatre, dance, and opera groups in and around his native city of Houston, Texas. www. JMCdesigns.info.

Jordan Ealey (dramaturg) first-year doctoral student in theatre and performance studies. UMD credits: *I've Been A Woman* (playwright), *I Don't* (playwright). Outside credits: *Wake Up!* (Dance Place, dramaturg), *Self Portrait With Dirty Hair* (Keegan Theatre, playwright).

Edima Essien (Miss Leah - Second Cast) junior theatre performance and communications major. Creative and Performing Arts Scholar. UMD credits: *Fearless New Play Festival* 2019 (Performer), *Citizen: An American Lyric* (Citizen #1 u/s). Outside credits: Infinity Theatre Company: *The Fantasticks* (The Mute u/s), 2019 Broadway Cabaret (performer). Joshua 1:9, Instagram: @edimaessien.

Matthew Gendreau (assistant stage manager) third-year computer science major. UMD credits: UMoves: Undergraduate Dance Concert 2019 (assistant stage manager).

Jack Golden (scenic designer) is an award-winning designer whose work has been seen across the Midwest and East Coast. *Flying' West* is his UMD debut! He

has designed for companies including the Hangar Theatre (2019 Design Fellow), Nextstop Theatre, Bristol Valley Theatre, Wellfleet Harbor Actor's Theatre, Ozark Actors Theatre, Artscentric, Thelma Theatre, among many others. Jack was honored to be Bismarck State College's 2019 Rising Star and is a second-year MFA candidate in the design program.

Miranda Hall (Sophie) senior theatre performance major and Spanish minor. UMD credits: *The Heidi Chronicles* (Heidi u/s), *The Fearless New Play Festival* (performer). Outside credits: *Twelfth Night* (Lady Olivia), Eurydice (Orpheus), and *The Marriage of Figaro* (Suzanne).

Yani Hill (Sophie - Second Cast) sophomore theatre major. Kreativity Diversity Troupe member. Outside credits: *Murder in Black and White* (Ann White, Personal Escort), *The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later* (ensemble, Jim Osborn/Ben), *The Little Mermaid* (ensemble, dance captain), *Guys and Dolls* (ensemble, dance captain).

Gislaine Hoyah (Miss Leah) senior community health major and poetry minor. College Park Scholars Peer Mentor Coordinator, Resident Assistant, Lupus Foundation of America Health Education and Research Intern. Outside credits: *For My Man* (young Desiree Satterwhite), *House of Cards* (extra).

Aliyah Jackson (Minnie) junior theatre performance and psychology major. UMD credits: *Hamlet Replayed* (House Ghost), *Lost Sons* (Nene), *The Fearless New Play Festival*. Outside credits: *Dog Sees God: Confessions of a Teenage Blockhead* (Tricia), *Black Comedy* (Clea), *Stop Kiss* (Nurse).

Michael Jerome Johnson (fight director) is happy to return to UMD after many years away. He taught stage combat for the Maryland Opera Studio from 1997-2008, choreographing several operas. Michael also choreographed the fights for *Romeo and Juliet* for the School of Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies in 2003. His most recent productions were *The Comedy of Errors* at Elm Shakespeare Company, *Too Heavy for Your Pocket* at George Street Playhouse, and served as both director and fight choreographer for *And in This Corner, Cassius Clay*, co-produced by Childs Play and Black Theatre Troupe in Phoenix. His work has been seen at Arena Stage, Shakespeare Theatre Company, Ford's Theatre, Woolly Mammoth, Studio Theatre, and The Kennedy Center. Michael holds the rank of Fight Director with the Society of American Fight Directors.

Alvin Mayes (co-director) is Area Head of Dance Performance and Scholarship for TDPS. He has taken UMD students to Santiago de Cuba for the V Festival de la Cultura de Origen Caribeño and Nagoya, Japan for the Port Sisters Festival. With a grant from the Greenbaum Charitable Foundation, in the summers of 2013 and 2014, he took a residency in Manta, Ecuador to work with Compañía Ceibadanza, both the professional company and students of the School. During this residency he created a number of works, of which los ojos sobre Manabí was selected for the adjudicated concert in XI Festival Internacional "Fragmentos de Junio" in Guayaquil, Ecuador. Mayes has created more than 150 dances for faculty and students in TDPS, the Maryland Youth Ballet, CityDance Ensemble and his duet company Karen & Alvin. Mayes has collaborated with Scot Reese on a number of productions including Free to Sing, the story of the First African American Opera Company which opened the Strathmore Music Center; Duke Ellington's *Sophisticated Ladies, The Colored Museum; In the Red and Brown Water; The Me Nobody Knows*; and *The Wild Party*.

Scot Reese (co-director) Theatre credits include productions from Los Angeles to New York. Television credits include daytime dramas, situation comedies, variety specials, commercials, and an Emmy Award for individual achievement in performance. Selected: Premieres of *In His Own Words* and *Blues Journey* at the Kennedy Center; *The Waiter* and *Blackballin'* at Arena Stage; *The Heidi Chronicles* and *Barefoot in the Park* (with Laura Linney and Eric Stoltz) for LA Theatre Works. Head of performance at University of Maryland, and founder of Kreativity Diversity Troupe, whose mission is to provide the University of Maryland with a diverse voice expressed through performance. In 2019, he was inducted into the College of Fellows of the American Theatre.

Justin Schmitz (sound designer) is thankful to be back for *Flyin' West*, having previously designed *The Heidi Chronicles*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Antigone*, *The Call*, and *The Wild Party*! He has designed for The Kennedy Center and Theater for Young Audiences, Signature Theatre, Round House Theatre, Theater J, Olney Theatre Center, Woolly Mammoth, Studio Theatre, Imagination Stage, Shakespeare Theatre Company, Rorschach, Forum, WSC Avant Bard, Chautauqua Theatre Company, Triad Stage, Catholic University, Gallaudet University, amongst others. He has two Helen Hayes nominations for *The Wild Party* (Constellation Theatre), and *I Call My Brothers* (Forum Theatre). Design fellowships: The Kennedy Center (2015) through the Kenan Institute, Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival to attend The Orchard Project (2011), and Chautauqua Theatre Company (2013). www. justinschmitztheatre.com.

Mollie Singer (assistant scenic designer) PLACE HOLDER PLACE HOLDER

Kyle Starling (Frank) senior theatre major. Creative and Performing Arts Scholar. UTAS Director of Advocacy. UMD credits: *Hamlet Replayed* (Hamlet/Peabody Blue), The Muses' *Dance Nation* (Dance Teacher Pat), *Citizen: An American Lyric* (Citizen 4), *Clove* (Eli), *Antigone* (Chorus, First Guard u/s). Taylor Thomas (Fannie - Second Cast) PLACE HOLDER PLACE HOLDER PLACEHOLDER PLACE HOLDER PLACE HOLDER PLACE HOLDER PLACEHOLDER PLACE HOLDER PLACE HOLDER PLACEHOLDER PLACEHOLDER<th

Channing Tucker (costume designer) PLACE HOLDER PLACE HOLDER

Kate Wander (assistant stage manager) second-year theatre major and arts leadership minor. Creative and Performing Arts Scholar. UMD credits: *The Heidi Chronicles* (assistant stage manager), *Hapa/Fuse* (assistant stage manager), *Hell is a Bubble Tea Shop* (assistant stage manager), *Little Shop of Horrors* (Q-lab operator).

Aaron Ward (Wil - Second Cast) senior theatre performance major. UMD credits: *Facedown Sketchup* (performer), *Shut the Sketchup* (performer). Outside credits: *Lost Sons* (Kennedy Center), Overtures (Signature Theatre).

Elijah Williams (Wil) junior theatre major. UMD credits: *The Heidi Chronicles* (Mark, Chris u/s) Outside credits: *Macbeth* (Macbeth), *A Winter's Tale* (Polixenes), *Pizza with Shrimp On Top* (Muggy).

Michael Winston (lighting designer) second-year MFA candidate in lighting design. UMD credits: *The Heidi Chronicles*, Faculty Dance Concert 2018: *Holding Fast* (lighting designer), *Citizen: An American Lyric* (assistant lighting designer). Outside credits: *The America Play, Titus Andronicus* (lighting designer), *Veneer of Beauty, Eye for an eye* (Fringe Fest 2019, lighting designer). You can see more of his work at www.forthewinston.weebly.com.

ASSISTANT DIRECTORS, DESIGNERS, AND STAGE MANAGERS

Assistant Scenic Designer Mollie Singer Assistant Lighting Designer J. Mitchell Cronin Assistant Stage Managers Matthew Gendreau, Kate Wander

PRODUCTION STAFF

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> DANIEL CONWAY Scene Design

> CRYSTAL U. DAVIS Head of MFA Dance: Dance Education Movement Analysis. and Dance Ethnography

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Head of History/Theory;

Theatre and Performance Studies

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RENEE NYACK Program Management Specialist

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The **UMD School of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies** advances and transforms the research and practice of the performing arts through a commitment to excellence and innovative education.