



Chadwick A. Boseman
College of Fine Arts

DEEP AZURE



by Chadwick A. Boseman
Directed by NSangou Njikam

THE HOWARD THEATRE
MARCH 27, 2025

HOWARD UNIVERSITY
CHADWICK A. BOSEMAN COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS

PRESENTS

DEEP AZURE



Written by Chadwick A. Boseman
Directed by NSangou Njikam

CAST

Lauren Banks, DJ Monday Blue,
Joshua Boone, LaVonda Elam, Isaiah Johnson,
Djali Amadou Kouyate, Adesola Osakalumi,
Greg Alvarez Reid, Jes Washington

CREATIVE + PRODUCTION TEAM

Written by..... Chadwick A. Boseman
Directed by..... NSangou Njikam
Creative Consultant..... Phylicia Rashad
Script Supervisor..... Sybil Roberts Williams
DJ / Music..... DJ Monday Blue
21 String Kora Djali Amadou Kouyate
Lighting Design..... Alan Edwards
Sound Design..... G Clausen
Stage Manager Sydneii Colter
Producer Derrick Boseman
Kevin Boseman
Simone Ledward Boseman
Co-Executive Producers..... Denise Saunders Thompson
Ron Gillyard
General Manager Carl D. White, Martian Entertainment
Producing Associate..... Kaylin Kellin, Martian Entertainment

THE HOWARD THEATRE

Production Manager David Gourdine
Event Coordinator Dana Kyle
Venue Owner / Operator Daniel Brindley



@hufinearts



STARTED ON CAMPUS NOW WE HERE!

"Purpose is the essential element of you. It is the reason you are on the planet at this particular time in history."

Chadwick A. Boseman

Howard University and Hip-Hop have connected and collaborated with results that have helped shape culture for the past quarter century. To fully appreciate where we are at this moment with the capacity to dream based on prior accomplishments and present ambitions, we must reflect on the 1990s for Hip-Hop and Howard University. During the 1990s, Hip-Hop's growth was intellectual, informational, and inspirational. In the 1990s you had many members of Hip-Hop's first generation graduating from and entering colleges and universities across the country. As the young people transition from adolescence to young adulthood, Hip-Hop became their mirror and window. Hip-Hop functioned as a mirror where young people were able to see reflections of themselves and evaluate what they were seeing on their own terms. Hip-Hop functioned as a window where young people were able to see the world around them through first hand experiences with the music providing a view into communities beyond their physical sight.

As a part of this select generation(s) of young people we grappled with the challenges of a political and societal narrowing of our burgeoning Hip Hop identity and the presented professional identities we left our neighborhoods to pursue at Howard University. If you think about it, regardless of our selected major we all at least minored in Theatre Arts because we were training for roles to fit into a society in a manner that called for the attitude of gratitude while showcasing acceptable expressions of our aptitude. While this is taking place, Hip-Hop found itself at a form of cultural crossroads where community and capitalism met and began to negotiate the terms of their co-existence. The 1990s brought experimentation and innovation that laid the pathway for where we find ourselves and Hip-Hop today...at another cultural crossroad.

The 1990s began with Hip-Hop pushing the boundaries of education forcing it to look for scholarship beyond the textbooks that often excluded or minimized our existence. A college campus proved to be a unique setting for young people to gather who have proven to have a level of knowledge and inquiry in search of spaces to process where they come from while mapping out the road for where their lives would take them in the future. It was at Howard University where a group of students from across the country and beyond came of age listening to Hip-Hop with regional origins whose messages consisted of universal themes. In 1991 a conference took place on campus entitled, "Hip-Hop at its Crossroads: Seizing the Cultural Initiative." The conference ran from 1991-1997 featuring discussions and activities that laid the groundwork for what the world knows today as Hip-Hop

education. This was a coming together of students, the industry, and the community and over time the world of academia took notice. If you were at or around Howard University in the 1990s you were on a campus and in a city where culture, creativity, and community came together in a way that allowed us to dream with our eyes open making realities out of ideas and ideals.

During the tenure of the Hip-Hop conference, students at Howard University created and hosted DJ battles, Amateur showcases, MC workshops, and fashion shows as Hip-Hop grew in its cultural reach in part by its ability to inform and influence the marketplace. One thing that came to fruition during this time period was a program called "Freestyle Union." "Freestyle Union" was created by Toni Blackman and it was a gathering where MCs from the campus and the community would come together and work on their craft and create community. The Cypher was a welcoming space where the young people opened themselves up to be creative with the objective of finding themselves, their voices, and their purpose. Hip-Hop at Howard University blurred and sometimes removed the lines that existed between student, alumni, and young person from the hood. Hip-Hop provided something for these groups of young people to come together in a way where they were respected, loved, and most of all, heard.

The latter part of the 1990s set the stage for Hip-Hop's existence as a commercial commodity and a cultural connector. The 1990s saw Hip-Hop become a profession where Black professionals were becoming millionaires. Record companies understood the goldmine that was college campus and there was only one Howard University. The students at Howard University had a front row seat to many stars of the day coming on campus to debut a new work and to just soak in some of the aura that was HU. Howard was also a place that was steep in bringing its African Consciousness to the forefront and it was evident in everything from the fashion on campus to the African painted on the ground in front of Douglass Hall. The 1990's presented Hip-Hop as a catalyst for making money and molding morality. This friction when it comes to the intentionality and or impact of artistic expression wasn't unique to Hip-Hop but it was a new experience for the young people at the early stages of their career pursuits in the late 1990s. These young people were witnessing Hip-Hop being successful as an industry like never before and the continued success in the industries of their studies. For the first time, was this an opportunity for these industries and identities to collaborate and experience a form of synthesis that would elevate both and become more inviting for people from different walks of life? What better space for this coming-of-age story to be grappled with and presented at Howard University within the College of Fine Arts. The College of Fine Arts was known for developing and presenting the finest Black artists within its fields of study to the world. At this time, the College of Fine Arts and its disciplines hadn't artistically embraced a Hip-Hop aesthetic but a change was on the immediate horizon.

Howard University once again became the canvas for beautiful art to be created. This time it was a group of self-defined "Hip-Hop" heads who understood Hip-Hop as a continuation of the Black Arts Movement and wanted to build on Hip-Hop's fifth element, knowledge of self. Hip-Hop was also seen as something that had the capacity to reveal and heal from the inside out. Hip-Hop represented creative exploration and spiritual revelation and there was a segment of young people who not only identified as Hip-Hop, they identified as African. When I say, "African" I am not speaking of "African-American" where African represents our skin and American represents



what's within. Howard University and its physical place within Washington DC afforded students the opportunities to learn about various African traditions and spiritual practices. These revelatory experiences were life-giving and life-affirming for these young people and some in particular made it their mission to have their iteration of Hip-Hop and their budding craft represent all that they believed and all they dreamed for themselves and their community.

Two students in particular, Kamilah Forbes and Chadwick A. Boseman participated in The Playwrights Lab which was designed to provide the space for experimental theatrical writing and development. It was here where they began to pull from the energy of the Hip-Hop cyphers, the spiritual awakenings experienced by learning about Africa and its traditions and spiritual practices, and their belief that theatre provided a space for healing as they began to craft rhymes and poems that would become characters and scripts. This experiential learning space became the launching pad for a form of Hip-Hop Theatre that was unique to Howard University and Washington DC because it was as much African-Centered as it was Hip-Hop. The belief was these two not only could co-exist on a stage, but they were inherently connected and the presentation of both was necessary for the audience to experience the transformative healing that is Hip-Hop Theatre.

Hip-Hop Theatre represents the best of us because it presents the stage as a space for experimentation, expression, and experiences. Hip-Hop Theatre represents a group of budding actors who lived out the sentiments of the legendary Toni Morrison, *"If there's a book that you want to read, but it hasn't been written yet, then you must write it."* The stage just as Hip-Hop beforehand became the mirror and window for a budding generation of young people who decided they were going to bring their Hip-Hop identities into adulthood in a way that made the world take notice of their existence, persistence, and resilience. Hip-Hop Theatre has opened doors for today's generation to not only become creators in their own right. Hip-Hop Theatre is now a subject of study within the discipline of Theatre Arts and Musical Theatre.

In 2025, just as we were in the 1990s and early 2000s, we find ourselves at a cultural crossroad. What will be birthed at this moment can be informed and influenced by what is presented on the stage at this moment of time. I believe wholeheartedly in the young people today who are studying their craft in the context of their culture while hearing and accepting the artist's responsibility as given to us by our beloved Bion, Amiri Baraka, *"The artist's role is to raise the consciousness of the people. To make them understand life, the world and themselves more completely. That's how I see it. Otherwise, I don't know why you do it."*

Timothy D. Jones

Adjunct Lecturer

Faculty Coordinator, Hip-Hop Minor

Chadwick A Boseman College of Fine Arts

Howard University

CAST



LAUREN BANKS (AZURE)

A graduate of the prestigious Yale School of Drama, Lauren is best known for her work in the acclaimed Paramount limited series **BASS REEVES**, opposite David Oyelowo. She previously starred in Showtime's **CITY ON A HILL** opposite Kevin Bacon, for producers Ben Affleck, Matt Damon, and Jennifer Todd. Lauren currently stars in Pulitzer Prize winner Katori Hall's play **THE BLOOD QUILT** for director Lileana Blain-Cruz at Lincoln Center Theater. Additional credits include **MANIAC** opposite Justin Theroux and **DIETLAND** opposite Julianna Margulies. Lauren holds a BFA in Theatre

Arts Acting from Howard University, where she graduated Magna Cum Laude, trained under the late Al Freeman Jr, and served as the President of The Howard Players for two years.



JOSHUA BOONE (ROSHAD)

Tony and Grammy Award nominated actor JOSHUA BOONE was most recently seen on Broadway playing the "absolute scene-stealing" role of 'Dally' in Danya Taymor's **THE OUTSIDERS**, for which he also received a Drama League nomination for Distinguished Performance. He starred as the lead of Netflix's **A JAZZMAN'S BLUES**, written, directed, and produced by Tyler Perry, which premiered worldwide at the 2022 Toronto International Film Festival. The film received a roaring 7-minute standing ovation and was nominated for several 2023 NAACP Awards. Josh himself

received nominations for Outstanding Actor in A Motion Picture and the Outstanding Breakthrough Performance in a Motion Picture. He will next be seen in **LOVE BROOKLYN**, which premiered in Dramatic Competition at Sundance 2024, starring opposite André Holland, Nicole Beharie, and DeWanda Wise, and executive produced by Steven Soderbergh.

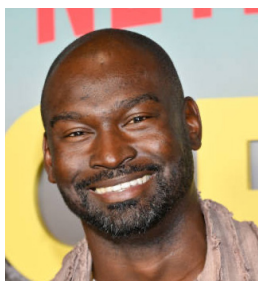
He was seen on stage in Dominique Morisseau's Broadway show, **SKELETON CREW**, starring opposite Phylicia Rashad and Chante Adams for Tony-winning director Ruben Santiago-Hudson. Joshua previously starred in **PREMATURE** for director Rashaad Ernesto Green opposite Zora Howard. He can also be seen in indie release **WHEELS** for writer/director Paul Starkman. He also starred on stage at MCC in **ALL THE NATALIE PORTMAN SAND** before that, he starred in Ivo van Hove's highly acclaimed Broadway production of **NETWORK** opposite Bryan Cranston. In 2018, he completed a guest star role on **SEVEN SECONDS** for Netflix. Additional stage credits include **ARTNEY JACKSON** (Williamstown), **ACTUALLY** (MTC, Williamstown), and **MOTHER COURAGE AND HER CHILDREN** (Classic Stage Company), **HOLLER IF YA HEAR ME** (Broadway).



LAVONDA ELAM (STREET KNOWLEDGE GOOD)

is multi-faceted artist in theatre, voice and movement; an educator & facilitator of social justice theatre; a health advocate; a former professor of *Performing Black Drama and Fundamentals of Acting at SUNY Purchase* and an inspired artistic citizen of the African Diaspora. In her performance journey and travels she's had great fortune in working with an incredible berth of legendary performers, writers, educators and activists. A few assistant directing works are: *PYT Love Reigns Film Recital* for Mind Builder's Creative Arts Center, Bronx NY; *Untamed* with Imani Douglas at Black Spectrum Theater,

Queens, NY; *Walk Hard* at The Metropolitan Theater, NYC and *The Store* at The Castillo Theater, NYC. Latest works as an artist; Brenda Simmons in Nsangou Njikam's, *When We Left*; *Shoe Story the Musical*, a workshop in NYC's LAByrnth Theater's Barn Series; The Northeast Political Prisoner's *Voices Through the Wall*. She deeply seeks the truth in all things.



ISAIAH JOHNSON (DEEP)

has appeared on and off Broadway, working with Al Pacino and Daniel Sullivan in *The Merchant of Venice*, Kevin Spacey and Sam Mendes in *Richard III*, Kelli O'Hara and Michael Greif in *Far From Heaven*, Roger Rees and Alex Timbers in *Peter and the Starcatcher*, Lin-Manuel Miranda and Thomas Kail in *Hamilton*, John Doyle's Tony, Emmy and Grammy award winning reimagining of "Color Purple". Among working alongside other notable artists and directors, he has starred in "Person of Interest" (CBS), "The Knick" (Cinemax), "Nancy Drew", "All Rise" (CBS), the Peabody Award

Winning Drama "David Makes Man" (HBO MAX), "Florida Man" starring Édgar Ramirez (Netflix), "FBI: Most Wanted", "Blue Bloods" and "Law and Order".

is a New York based actress from Memphis, TN. Received her MFA from Actors Studio Drama School.

OFF-BROADWAY: *When Gold Turns Black*, *Coping Mechanism*, *White Woman*, *Black Boy*, *North Carolina*, *Danny and the Deep Blue Sea*, THEATER: *Who Will Sing For Lena*, an international one-woman show; *Clybourne Park*, *Paradise Blue*, *The Mountaintop*, and more FILM: *The Housewife*, *Luminous*, *Wall Apart*, TELEVISION: *The Equalizer*, *The Gilded Age* on HBO, *Half the History: Belinda Royale Story*, *The Board*. VOICE OVER: *Greater Boston*, *Windfall*, *What's the Frequency?* SERIES: *The Board*, AWARDS: *Best Lead Actress*, *People's Choice*, *Best Production*, winner of *AACT National Festival 2019 and 2021* and *Monaco Mondial du Theatre* recipient of honors. Lifetime Member of Actors Studio.



AMADOU KOUYATE (21 STRING KORA)

is the 150th generation of the Kouyate family of Manding Diali (oral historians/ musicians of West Africa) and the first generation born of his father’s lineage in America. Amadou performs a musical montage on the 21-string Kora and rhythmic presentations on Djembe and Koutiro drums. His repertoire ranges from traditional songs from the 13th century to original contemporary compositions incorporating blues and jazz riffs.

In addition to his solo work, Amadou Kouyate performs with his world rock ensemble Proper SKANKS, Amadou Kouyate Ensemble, the international duo project WEEDOU Everything!, and Memory of African Culture. Amadou has worked extensively with Chuck Davis, the African American Dance Ensemble, Farafina Kan, and the KanKouran West African Dance Company. Some of his credits include performances at The Kennedy Center, Smithsonian Institution, The NAMM Show, Bristol Academy and Isle of Whyte (England), Tim Festival (Brazil), Petronio Alvarez Afro-Colombian Festival (Colombia), Garvey Festival (Costa Rica), Lowell, Baltimore Rhythm Festival, East-Lansing and Dayton National Folk Festivals, Harrisonburg International Festival, Intersections Festival (DC) World Culture Festival (DC), DanceAfrica DC, Atlanta, and Chicago, with The National Symphony Orchestra, DC Jazz Dest (DC), Carnegie Hall, National Geographic, The Creative Alliance and the Victoria World Rhythm Festival, and had played on multiple Grammy-nominated projects.

Amadou received the Maryland Start Arts Council Governor’s Citation, The Maryland Master Apprentice Award, and other artistic awards from the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County, DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, Special Talents and Musical Theatre Scholarships at Howard University and Levine School of Music. In his traditional scholarship, Amadou has studied in Mali, Senegal, Guinea, and The Gambia with master musicians of the Djali tradition including Djimo Kouyate and Toumani Diabate. Amadou has had an illustrious career as a performer and educator. He was a Lecturer of African Music and Ethnomusicology at the University of Maryland, director of the African Drum Ensemble, and Artist-In-Residence at Montgomery College of Rockville, and has been a professor on faculty at American University, Goucher College, and UMBC. Amadou is an alum of the distinguished Artist in Residence program at the renowned Strathmore Music Center and a teaching artist at the Wolf Trap Organization for the Performing Arts. Amadou Kouyate is currently on faculty and a professor at Howard University.



ADESOLA OSAKALUMI (STREET KNOWLEDGE EVIL)

Broadway: Skeleton Crew, Fela!, Equus. Off Broadway: runboyrun (NYTW); Syncing Ink (The Flea). TV: Harlem, Endgame, Ice, Blue Bloods. Film: IBRAHIM, Enchanted, Across the Universe, Sex and the City 2. Choreography: Skeleton Crew (Broadway MTC); Cullud Wattah, Coal Country, Othello (Public Theater); Leroy & Lucy (Steppenwolf Theater), The Grove (Huntington Theater); Syncing Ink (Victoria Theater); runboyrun, Eyewitness Blues (NYTW); Good Grief (Vineyard); Jam on the Groove (Minetta Lane); School of Rock (2003 film). Awards: Bessie Recipient; Drama Desk Nominee.



JES WASHINGTON (STAGE DIRECTIONS)

is a New York based actress from Memphis, TN. Received her MFA from Actors Studio Drama School. OFF-BROADWAY: *When Gold Turns Black*, *Coping Mechanism*, *White Woman*, *Black Boy*, *North Carolina*, *Danny and the Deep Blue Sea*, THEATER: *Who Will Sing For Lena*, an international one-woman show; *Clybourne Park*, *Paradise Blue*, *The Mountaintop*, and more FILM: *The Housewife*, *Luminous*, *Wall Apart*, TELEVISION: *The Equalizer*, *The Gilded Age* on HBO, *Half the History: Belinda Royale Story*, *The Board*. VOICE OVER: *Greater Boston*, *Windfall*, *What's the Frequency?* SERIES: *The Board*,

AWARDS: Best Lead Actress, People's Choice, Best Production, winner of AACT National Festival 2019 and 2021 and Monaco Mondial du Theatre recipient of honors. Lifetime Member of Actors Studio.



DJ MONDAY BLUE (DJ/MUSIC)

TA sonic revolutionary with Southern roots and Brooklyn creative fire, Monday Blue spins euphoric journeys from wax to digital wavelengths. Her sets vibrate Black womanist consciousness, motivational movement, and an unwavering commitment to the funk – from deep bounce to rock steady supreme. Currently, she's a featured DJ at NYC's Soho Grand Hotel and the official tour DJ for the Buy From A Black Woman Inspire Tour presented by H&M. In addition, her sonic arsenal has powered stages for Soul In The Horn, Black Girls Love Vinyl, 651 Arts, Virgin Hotels NYC, The Pulitzer

Prizes, Andscape, and The Meteor, effortlessly bending genres and energizing diverse cultural spaces.

Creator of Doyennes of Disc—a vinyl party celebrating women selectors—Monday Blue continues to push sonic boundaries and grow community. Catch her digital realm-hopping on Instagram and Twitch at [@djmondayblue](https://www.instagram.com/djmondayblue) and [djmondayblue.com](https://www.djmondayblue.com).

CREATIVE TEAM



CHADWICK BOSEMAN (PLAYWRIGHT)

A native of South Carolina, Chadwick Boseman was fueled by purpose and the power of God. It was at Howard University, The Mecca, that Boseman began to define that purpose through writing, directing, acting and activism.

His breakout performance came in 2013 when he slid into the weighty shoes of Jackie Robinson in *42*. His portrayal garnered rave reviews, and would be the first of a long list of American heroes he would personify. Boseman received numerous accolades for his masterful portrayal of James Brown in *Get On Up*, a role that would set him apart and establish him as a leading man in the industry. He next starred in the title role of *Marshall*, which follows a young Thurgood Marshall as he battles through a career-defining case.

Boseman then joined the Marvel Cinematic Universe as the African superhero "Black Panther" in *Captain America: Civil War*. This marked the film debut for the character, "T'Challa." Boseman brought the character to the forefront starring in his own solo film, *Black Panther*, which received critical acclaim, broke global box office records and had social and cultural impact around the world. The film received seven Academy Award nominations, including Marvel's first-ever Best Picture nomination. Boseman won the NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Actor in a Motion Picture, and the Screen Actors Guild Award for Outstanding Performance by a Cast in a Motion Picture alongside the film's ensemble.

In 2019, Boseman starred in *21 Bridges*, which he produced with his partner Logan Coles, through their shingle Xception Content. That same year he appeared in *Da 5 Bloods*, directed by Academy Award winner Spike Lee, as fallen soldier "Stormin' Norman". Boseman's character guided his fellow vets through their inner battles with acceptance and mental health. In *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, a screen adaptation of the famed August Wilson play, Boseman starred as Levee, opposite Viola Davis. The film featured an award-winning team behind the camera in producer, director and writer with Denzel Washington, George C. Wolfe, and Ruben Santiago-Hudson.

In each project throughout his career the edification of black folk, through the art of storytelling, remained cornerstone.



NSANGOU NJIKAM (DIRECTOR)

is an actor, playwright and Hip Hop Theatre artist originally from Baltimore, MD.

He is the creator of *Syncing Ink* as well as *Re:Definition*, *When We Left parts 1 & 2*, *A FREEKY INTRODUCTION*, *21 STRINGS* and he is one of seven writers of *Hands Up: Seven Plays; Seven Testimonials*. Acting credits include *Syncing Ink* (Alley Theatre/Flea Theater), *Re:Definition* (LaMama), *Henry V* (Classical Theatre of Harlem), *Deep Azure* (Congo Square Theatre), and *A FREEKY INTRODUCTION* (Atlantic Theatre Company).

NSangou's play *Re:Definition* (Hip Hop Theatre Festival reading) was developed and directed by Chadwick Boseman. NSangou has also written for and collaborated with Grammy Award winner **Common**, specifically on his Audible.com project "**BlueBird Memories**", the **2020 NBA All Star Game** and the Audible interview series **Mindpower Mixtape**. His Hip Hop Theatre play, *I.D.* (commission by Penn State University) premiered at the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown, South Africa. NSangou is a member of the 2015 Emerging Writers Group at the Public Theater as well as a member of UNIVERSES, a theatre company fusing jazz, blues, hip hop, Spoken Word and Spanish boleros. He received his BFA in Acting from **Howard University**. After tracing his African ancestry, he received his name from the Bamum King in Cameroon. He is represented by United Talent Agency. He currently resides in New York City.



PHYLICIA RASHAD (CREATIVE CONSULTANT)

An accomplished actor and stage director, Phylicia Rashad became a household name when she portrayed Claire Huxtable on *The Cosby Show*, a character whose enduring appeal has earned her numerous honors and awards. She has appeared in NBC's *This Is Us*, in the popular Fox TV series *Empire*, and in Tarrell Alvin McCraney's Peabody Award-winning series *David Makes Man*, on the OWN Network.

While television was a catalyst in the rise of Ms. Rashad's career, she has also been a force on the stage, appearing both on and Off Broadway, often in projects that showcase her musical talent such as *Jelly's Last Jam*, *Into the Woods*, *Dreamgirls* and *The Wiz*.

In 2016, Ms. Rashad was inducted into the Theater Hall of Fame and received the 2016 Lucille Lortel Award for Outstanding Leading Actress in a Play for her performance as Shelah in Tarell Alvin McCraney's *Head of Passes* at the Public Theater. Ms. Rashad performed the role of the Duchess of Gloucester in *Richard II*, the 2020 *Shakespeare on the Radio* collaboration between The Public Theater and New York public radio station, WNYC.

On Broadway, Ms. Rashad has performed in Dominique Morriseau's *Skeleton Crew* (Tony and Drama Desk Awards), *August Osage County*, Tennessee Williams' *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (a role that she reprised on the London stage), August Wilson's *Gem of The Ocean* (Tony Award nomination) and in Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* at Lincoln Center.



Ms. Rashad received both the Drama Desk and the Tony Award for Best Actress in a Play for her riveting performance as Lena Younger in the 2004 Broadway revival of Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in The Sun*.

Among Ms. Rashad's film credits are *Creed and Creed II*, *Just Wright*, Tyler Perry's *Good Deeds*, *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When The Rainbow Is Enuf* and the 2020 release, *A Fall From Grace*. Recent film projects include *Black Box*, *Soul*, and the Netflix holiday musical, *Jingle Jangle*.

Ms. Rashad made her critically acclaimed directorial debut at the Seattle Repertory Theater with August Wilson's *Gem of the Ocean*. She has also directed Stephen Adly Guirgis' *Our Lady of 121st Street*, *The Roommate*, *Blues for an Alabama Sky*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* (2014 NAACP Theatre Award for Best Director), *Immediate Family*, *Fences*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, and *Four Little Girls*.

Respected in the academic world as well, Ms. Rashad was appointed Dean of the Chadwick A. Boseman College of Fine Arts at Howard University in May of 2021. She has conducted Master Classes at many colleges, universities, and arts organizations including Howard University, New York University, Carnegie Mellon, The Black Arts Institute of the Stella Adler Studio of Acting, and the prestigious Ten Chimneys Foundation.

Ms. Rashad also holds the distinction of being the first recipient of the Denzel Washington Chair in Theatre at Fordham University.

Ms. Rashad's commitment to excellence in the performing arts has been recognized by the numerous colleges and universities that have presented her with Honorary Doctorates.

Ms. Rashad has also received countless esteemed awards including the BET Honors Theatrical Arts Award, Chicago Shakespeare Theatre's Spirit of Shakespeare Award, and the Inaugural Legacy Award of the Ruben Santiago Hudson Fine Arts Learning Center.

She also serves on several important boards including Brainerd Institute Heritage (which is steering the restoration of Kumler Hall at the historic site of Brainerd Institute in Chester, South Carolina) and DADA, the Debbie Allen Dance Academy.

Since 2017, Ms. Rashad has been the Brand Ambassador of the National Trust for Historic Preservation African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund.

Phylicia Rashad graduated Magna Cum Laude from Howard University and is the mother of two adult children.



SYBIL ROBERTS WILLIAMS (SCRIPT SUPERVISOR)

has spent the past twelve years cultivating her craft as a playwright and dramaturg. Her work has been professionally produced by Chicago's ETA Creative Arts Theatre; New York's National Black Theater; Pittsburgh's Kuntu Theatre; University of Pennsylvania; CALARTS; and Harlem's Rebel Theatre. Her play DREAM OF OPHELIA was nominated for a prestigious JEFF Award in 2000; and LIBERATING PRAYER: A LOVESONG FOR MUMIA has been published in AUGUST WILSON AND THE BLACK AESTHETIC edited by Dr. Sandra G. Shannon. Her musical FROM U. STREET TO THE COTTON CLUB was produced in Washington, DC. Most recently, SEARCHING FOR GABRIELA, a play with music featuring the poetry of Gabriela Mistral was produced in Washington, D.C. by the IN-SERIES. ZIMBABWE: OR SHE TALKS TO BOB MARLEY was read as part of the Our Voices Women's Playwriting Conference at Regis College in March 2011. Most recently, she was commissioned once again by the IN-SERIES to create a musical celebrating the influence of African-American, operetta, and other forms of American popular music on the Broadway stage titled SHUFFLE TO SHOWBOAT for the 2011 Washington DC. Intersections Festival. As a dramaturg, she completed a three-year project creating a docudrama to celebrate the lives of the Little Rock Nine on the occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Central High School Desegregation Crisis titled OUR LEGACY: IT HAPPENED IN LITTLE ROCK written and directed by Mr. Rajendra Ramoon Maharaj at the Arkansas Repertory Theatre. She also continues to serve as dramaturg for the Latino/African-American Theatre festival VOICES AT THE RIVER. In 2011, she served as Humanities Scholar at Woolly Mammoth Theater on the CLYBOURNE PARK PROJECT. She also served as dramaturg for the Essential Theater's New Play Development Program for BETTY'S WISH by La'Chris Jordan. Sybil R. Williams is currently Director of African American and African Diaspora Studies at American University.



ALAN EDWARDS (LIGHTING DESIGNER)

West End: Harry Clarke. Off-Broadway: Sally & Tom (The Public); Sunset Baby, The Hot Wing King, Fires in the Mirror (Lortel nomination), Twilight: LA 1992 (Signature); Harry Clarke (Lortel Award, Vineyard Theatre); Kill Move Paradise (Drama Desk nomination, NBT); A Midsummer Night's Dream, Twelfth Night (CTH). Regional: Beautiful (Asolo Rep); Gatsby: An American Myth, Twilight: LA 1992 (A.R.T.); Appropriate (The Old Globe). Dance: In the Same Tongue (Dianne McIntyre); Chasing Magic (Ayodele Casel); Rhythm Is Life (Dormeshia); Lifted by Christopher Rudd for American Ballet Theatre. Education: Yale School of Drama.



G CLAUSEN (SOUND DESIGNER)

is a sound designer and composer based in Brooklyn. Some of his theatre credits include: *Syncing Ink* (Victoria Theaters at The Apollo); *I Am Deliver'd't* (Co-Pro Dallas Theater Center and Actors Theatre of Louisville); *Twisted Melodies* (St. Louis Repertory); *Crumbs From the Table of Joy*, *How I Learned What I Learned*, *Native Son*, *Skeleton Crew* (Playmakers Repertory); *PYG* or *The Misedumacation of Dorian Belle* (Studio Theatre); *Queen of the Night* (Victory Gardens Theater); *Peter Panto* (People's Light); *The Revolutionists*, *Rebellious*, *The 39 Steps*, *Member of the Wedding*, *Dirty*

Blonde, *Fences*, *Don Juan*, *The Mystery of Irma Vep*, *And Then There Were None*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Two Wolves and a Lamb* (Triad Stage); *The Piano Lesson*, *Too Heavy for Your Pocket*, *How I Learned What I Learned*, *Intimate Apparel*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, *Hooded*, or *Being Black for Dummies* (Pyramid Theatre Company); *Welcome to Arroyo's*, *Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery* (Cape Fear Regional Theatre).



SYDNEII COLTER (STAGE MANAGER)

is proud to be collaborating with Howard University for the first time. Off-Broadway: *Bad Kreyol* (Signature Theatre), *Bernarda's Daughters*, *Evanston Salt Costs Climbing*, *Black No More* (The New Group), *Covenant* (Roundabout Theater). Other recent credits include: *SLAMDANCE garage*, *Self-Portraits* (The Bushwick Starr), *Sweet Chariot* (Shiva Theatre), *Echoes in the Garden* (The Chain Theatre).

PRODUCERS

Derrick Boseman, Kevin Boseman, Simone Ledward Boseman



DENISE SAUNDERS THOMPSON (CO-EXECUTIVE PRODUCER)

nonprofit/for-profit management and philanthropic career spans over 30 years of executive leadership and program director experience. Mrs. Saunders Thompson was presented with the *2021 National Medal of Arts* by President Joe Biden during an East Room ceremony at the White House and received the award on behalf of The International Association of Blacks in Dance (IABD). Denise currently serves as the Assistant Dean for Administration at Howard University's Chadwick A. Boseman

College of Fine Arts, Washington, DC. She has advised organizations on administrative, programmatic and fundraising issues including strategic plans, policy and procedures, communications, budgets and contracts. And she has pioneered top-ranked courses on the collegiate level (graduate and undergraduate) in artistic development, entrepreneurship, fundraising, grant writing, leadership, management, and production.



Prior to Howard University, Denise served as President and CEO of IABD where she steered the organization through a period of change management and growth in all areas including the creation of MOVE (Managing Organizational Vitality and Endurance) a collaborative program with Nonprofit Finance Fund that delivers methodology and resources to strengthen the financial and organizational health of the IABD Membership. This program has brought more than \$10 million dollars in funding support and resources to Black dance companies and organizations since 2017.

In June 2022, Saunders Thompson co-curated a week of performances entitled "Reframing the Narrative" at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts by Dance Theatre of Harlem, Ballethnic Dance Company and Collage Dance Collective along with other Black-identifying ballet dancers from across the United States to highlight the incredible work these pillar companies are doing in ballet. Throughout the years, she has participated in speaking engagements at state, regional, national, and international conferences, and has been invited to contribute to published articles and books. She holds an M.F.A. from the University of California, Los Angeles in Arts Producing and Management, and a B.F.A. from Howard University in Theatre Arts Administration. Denise is the proud mother of Kellen, stepmom to Darrin, Jr., and happily married to Darrin, Sr.



RON GILLYARD (CO-EXECUTIVE PRODUCER)

is a trusted marketing and media executive who has advanced the initiatives of companies and individuals in the technology, marketing, and entertainment industries for over 25 years. Gillyard is a partner and Chief Growth Officer of Quantasy + Associates [Q+A], an award-winning full-service marketing agency. An intuitive strategist, Gillyard has been able to consistently drive revenue growth, market penetration, and creative development for his clients.

Gillyard served as co-producer of the award-winning documentary "Maurice Hines: Bring Them Back." He executive produced the Peabody Award-winning, Emmy-nominated documentary, "Mr. Soul." Additionally, Gillyard has also had the pleasure of producing the award-winning Broadway-bound musical, BORN FOR THIS and will be bringing the play, SIDNEY, based on the life of Sidney Poitier, to the stage.

Gillyard enjoyed a remarkable career in the music and entertainment industry serving as head of multiple record labels and working with such artists as Stevie Wonder, Luther Vandross, Sean "Diddy" Combs, Bebe and Cece Winans, Mary J. Blige, Snoop Dogg, Eminem, Will Smith, and Alicia Keys. Gillyard earned Grammy award for his work as a producer. Gillyard serves on the board of the Center Theater Group LA and the advisory board of the Boston Arts Academy.



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When you are deciding on next steps, next jobs, next careers, further education, you should rather find purpose than a job or career. Purpose crosses disciplines. Purpose is an essential element of you.”

- CHADWICK AARON BOSEMAN

