

## THE THANKYOUS

Roger Avery, Thompson's Hospitality

Dwight Cook, Production Manager, Morgan State University

Denise Kumani Gantt, Director of Education, Lyric Baltimore

Ebony Evans, Arts Education Specialist, Lyric Baltimore

Vanessa Russell, Eagle Achievement Center

Cynthia Edwards, CEO, Today's Dream Tomorrow's Future

Anna E. Barnett, Education Manager, Indiana Repertory Theatre

## COMING NEXT

### CHICKEN & BISCUITS

A raucous church family comedy by Douglas Lyons

Heralded as "a laugh-out-loud feast of Black joy"  
by Ayanna Prescod (Variety).

#### Performance Dates:

February 29<sup>th</sup> - March 3<sup>rd</sup> &

March 8<sup>th</sup> - March 10<sup>th</sup> (two weekends)

THE 2023-2024 RE-PLAY SEASON

# PLAYBILL

COPPIN REPERTORY THEATRE  
presents

# PIPELINE

An illustration of two brown hands, one on the left and one on the right, firmly grasping a thick yellow pipeline. The pipeline is curved into a U-shape, with the hands holding the top ends. The background is black, and the pipeline is flanked by vertical yellow bars. The word 'PIPELINE' is written in large, green, block letters across the top of the pipeline.

NOV 10, 2023 @ 7:30 P.M.  
NOV 11 & 12, 2023 @ 3:00 P.M.

Written by Dominique Morisseau ■ Directed by Willie O. Jordan

James Weldon Johnson Auditorium

Coppin State University  
2500 West North Avenue  
Baltimore, MD 21216

# THE CAST

Nya ..... Andromeda Bacchus  
 Omari ..... Obed Gant  
 Jasmine ..... Brittany Saunders  
 Xavier ..... Isa Williams  
 Laurie ..... Autumn Weisz  
 Dun ..... Jermaine Jackson

# THE SETTING

**Setting** An inner-city environment where the public school is under duress  
 Fernbrook Academy  
 Undefined Space, an alternate reality bleeding into reality

**Time** The Present

**The Scenes**

- Scene 1 Somewhere Outside Chadsey High School
- Scene 2 Fernbrook Academy--A Girl's Dormitory Bedroom
- Scene 3 Teachers' Lounge
- Scene 4 Nya's Classroom; Omari in Undefined Space
- Scene 5 Fernbrook Academy--A Girl's Dormitory Bedroom
- Scene 6 Nya's Living Room
- Scene 7 Nya's Classroom
- Scene 8 Teachers' Lounge
- Scene 9 A Hospital Waiting Room
- Scene 10 Undefined Space for Jasmine, Nya and Omari

# THE STAFF

**THEATRE FACULTY AND STAFF**

Producer ..... Garey A. Hyatt  
 Director of Speech & Theatre ..... Willie O. Jordan  
 Director of Design & Production ..... Michael D. Klima  
 Technical Director ..... James A. Brown  
 Director Emerita ..... Amini Johari-Courts

**PRODUCTION STAFF**

Director ..... Willie O. Jordan  
 Set Designer ..... James A. Brown  
 Lighting Designer ..... Michael D. Klima  
 Costume Designer ..... Sharlene Clinton  
 Sound Designer ..... Jazmin Wright  
 Stage Manager ..... Saidai Stuteley  
 Assistant Stage Managers ..... Paul Iroanya, Katiana Ciceron  
 Graphic Designer ..... Andrew Brezinski  
 Lighting Console Operator ..... Larry Gill  
 Sound Console Operator ..... Jazmin Wright  
 Projection Console Tech ..... Staige Kitchen  
 Wardrobe Crew ..... Kalise Robinson  
 Swing Technician ..... Demariya Ragin  
 Running Crew ..... Bobbi Forrest, Jajuan Johnson, Quentin Ward-Godwin  
 Photographer ..... Justin Eastman  
 House Managers ..... Elizabeth Jekhede, Naima Williams  
 Box Office Manager ..... Garey A. Hyatt

**DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES**

Department Chair ..... Blessing Diala-Ogamba  
 Administrative Assistant ..... Gloria Robbins

**MEMBERS OF THE AUDIENCE ARE NOT ALLOWED TO TAKE PHOTOGRAPHS AND/OR ELECTRONICALLY RECORD ANY PORTION OF THIS PERFORMANCE.**

## THE COMPANY

### COPPIN REPERTORY THEATRE

#### Who We Are

**Coppin Repertory Theatre (CRT)** is the producing arm of Coppin State University's Visual and Performing Arts Program. CRT regularly produces 3-4 major productions annually. These presentations are directed and designed by, and cast with, visiting professionals, faculty members and the department's most advanced theatre students.

CRT is open to all Urban Arts Majors who are students at Coppin State University. Students are invited to join the Rep based on the quality of their work, both onstage and offstage. Character, service, leadership and scholarship are considered as a part of the membership for this group. To be invited is an honor of the highest caliber.

#### Mission

CRT exists to use theatre as a tool to

- Build a community of learners
- Nurture and inspire student's creative potential
- Instill the values of discipline and commitment to lifelong growth

#### Vision

CRT aspires to move from relative obscurity to become one of the vanguard theatre companies in Baltimore City, County, the state of Maryland, the mid-Atlantic region and the nation.

#### Core Beliefs & Values

- **Excellence** The program shall be identified as a center of excellence. The unit will endeavor to achieve performances of the highest artistic quality, regardless of the level of financial resources invested.
- **Integrity** Faculty, staff and students will challenge themselves continually to employ the highest standards of honesty, fairness and artistic/scholarly integrity in all our work.
- **Lifelong Learning** The program expects every member of its community to participate in a continuous learning process. Faculty, staff and students will continue to upgrade their knowledge base and skills annually.
- **Focus** Students are and shall remain at the center of the educational enterprise.
- **Creativity** The program places a very high value on creativity in all of its endeavors.

## THE AUTHOR



**D**ominique Morisseau is the author of *The Detroit Project*, a three-play cycle that includes *Skeleton Crew* (Atlantic Theater Company/Scott Rudin), *Paradise Blue* (Williamstown Theatre Festival), and *Detroit '67* (Public Theater, Classical Theatre of Harlem, and NBT). Her additional plays include *Sunset Baby* (LAByrnth Theater), *Blood at the Root* (National Black Theatre), and *Follow Me to Nellie's* (Premiere

Stages). She is an alumna of the Public Theater's Emerging Writers Group, Women's Project Lab, and Lark Playwrights Workshop, and has developed work at Sundance Lab and Eugene O'Neill Playwrights Conference. Morisseau's work has been commissioned by the Hip-Hop Theater Festival, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Women's Project, South Coast Rep, People's Light and Theatre, and Oregon Shakespeare Festival/Penumbra Theatre.

She has received numerous honors for her work, including a Stavis Playwright Award, NAACP Image Award, Spirit of Detroit Award, Weissberger Award, PoNY Fellowship, Sky Cooper New American Play Prize, TEER Spirit Trailblazer Award, Steinberg Playwright Award, the Samuel French Award for Impact & Activism in the Theatre Community, Graham F. Smith Peace Foundation Prize for promotion of human rights (*Blood at the Root*), Edward M. Kennedy Prize for Drama (*Detroit '67*), and Obie Award (*Skeleton Crew*).

Morisseau previously served as co-producer on the Showtime series *Shameless*. Her play, *Pipeline*, completed a successful run at Lincoln Center, and her new musical, *Ain't Too Proud: The Life and Times of the Temptations*, after completing its Broadway run, is on a national tour.

# THE PROFILES

## THE CAST

**Andromeda Bacchus** (Nya) is a junior Urban Arts-Theatre major whose interest is in performance. Her acting credits with Coppin Rep include *Colorblind: The Katrina Monologues*, *The Colored Museum*, and *The Glass Menagerie*. Her last stage appearance was as Candy Lady in Katori Hall's *Hoodoo Love* at Spotlighters Theatre, a role for which she was nominated for Best Supporting Actress by the Broadway World Regional Awards-Baltimore.

**Obed Gant** (Omari) is a senior Urban Arts major with a theatre focus. He made his debut with Coppin Rep as the Young Veteran in *Colorblind: The Katrina Monologues*. Since then, he appeared as J.B. Stratford in *The Magic City Massacre*, Leland in *Blues for an Alabama Sky*, and Malcolm in *Broke-ology*. He dedicates his performance to his late grandmother, Ursula Jones, a former writer who introduced him to African American writers. He would also like to thank Priscilla and Bernard Gant for allowing him to turn his dreams into reality.

**Jermaine Jackson** (Dun), a native of Baltimore, is a 2021 Coppin alumnus. He appeared in Coppin's Harlem Renaissance Project, *Best of Enemies*, *Tell Pharaoh*, *Homeplace*, and he stage managed *For Colored Girls*. In spring, 2017, he earned a Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival semi-finalist award for acting. He loves the arts, sports, and video games. He thanks all his friends for their support.

**Brittany Saunders** (Jasmine) hails from Baltimore. She received her Bachelor's degree in Dance at Coppin, studying African dance, ballet, modern, and jazz, and her personal favorite, liturgical dance. She earned a second degree in Urban Arts-Theatre. Her previous appearances include roles in *The Colored Museum* and *The Glass Menagerie*. She was last seen as Sonia King in *Broke-ology*, for which she received an Irene Ryan Acting Scholarship Nomination from the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival.

**Isa Williams** (Xavier) is a senior Urban Arts-Theatre Major from Brooklyn, NY. He enlisted in the Army for 5 years as a Broadcast Communications Specialist before returning to Coppin to finish his degree. His acting roles include Victor Tate in *Zooman and the Sign* and Grant Wiggins in *A Lesson Before Dying*. His last stage appearance was as Ennis King in *Broke-ology*, for which he received an Irene Ryan Acting Scholarship Nomination from the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival.

## SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE

School disciplinary policies disproportionately affect Black students.

Category	White	Black
Public School Enrollment	16%	51%
Multiple Suspensions	42%	31%

Zero-tolerance discipline has resulted in Black students facing disproportionately harsher punishment than white students in public schools.<sup>1</sup>

Black students represent **31%** of school-related arrests<sup>2</sup>

Black students are suspended and expelled **3x** more than white students.<sup>3</sup>

Students suspended or expelled for a discretionary violation are nearly three times more likely to be in contact with the juvenile justice system the following year.<sup>4</sup>

BROWN AT 60, STILL SEPARATE. STILL UNEQUAL.

1. Open Schools' Health and Safety Policies/2016-2017 School Discipline Statistics.pdf  
2. NAC  
3. NAC  
4. Tracking School Rules Map (http://www.nac.org/2016/08/22/Tracking\_School\_Rules\_Map\_Report\_Final.pdf)

## THE NOTES

### THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE

Over the past 20 years, the term “school-to-prison pipeline” has been used to describe how harsh school disciplinary policies and law enforcement policies work together to feed young people into the criminal punishment system. Researchers have found that excessive suspensions and expulsions lead to various negative outcomes for students, including dropping out of school—and studies have shown that high school dropouts are more likely to be incarcerated than those who graduate high school. In particular, black students are disproportionately disciplined in school—although statistics show that they do not actually misbehave more than their peers.

This trend can be traced back to the Columbine school shootings in 1999. Since then federal and state laws have instituted zero-tolerance policies that assign “explicit, predetermined punishments to specific violations of school rules, regardless of the situation or context of the behavior.” At the same time, in the streets, the war on drugs has led to more punitive criminal legal responses, such as three strikes and mandatory minimum sentencing.

Police officers in schools play a critical role in this pipeline. In 1975, only one percent of U.S. schools reported having police officers; today, most urban schools have police on site. In New York City, public schools employ more cops than counselors. Many schools also have metal detectors and surveillance cameras under the pretext of keeping students safe.

The presence of police officers in schools often leads to harsher, sometimes brutal treatment of students. According to a 2011 report from the Justice Policy Institute, “when schools have law enforcement on site, students are more likely to be arrested by police instead of discipline being handled by school officials. This leads to more kids being funneled into the juvenile justice system, which is both expensive and associated with a host of negative impacts on youth.”

The realization that zero-tolerance policies in schools have led to criminalization and incarceration for students of color, and especially black students, has prompted calls for restorative justice and other, less punitive discipline practices. Some advocates say that the best way to prevent future incarceration is to invest on the front end in providing excellent educational opportunities for all. The outlook for such investment, however, is bleak. Nationally, since 1990, spending on prisons has increased three times as quickly as spending on education.

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## THE PROFILES

### THE CAST (Continued)

**Autumn Weisz** (Laurie)--After studying professionally in New York and LA, and marked with appearances in feature films, on network television, and twenty-five successful years in the radio broadcast industry, Autumn is quietly celebrating 73 years and counting as an actor. A native Texan now based on the East Coast, Autumn trains medical personnel for several high-profile medical entities in the Baltimore area including Johns Hopkins and the MedStar chain of hospitals.

**Saidai Stuteley** (Stage Manager), who lives in Severn, Maryland is a senior Urban Arts Theatre Design/Tech major. She previously served as state manager for Coppin Rep’s production of *Broke-ology*.

**Jajuan Johnson** (Understudy/Running Crew), is a 18-year-old Baltimore native, first year Urban Arts Theatre Performance major at Coppin State University. His stage credits include *You Will Not Stop Our Journey* and *Dorothy and the Wizard of Oz*, productions done at Coppin Academy. Learning from inspirational mentors, like Ms. Dashiell, Dr. Hyatt, and Professor Jordan, has kept him passionate and excited about theatre. *Pipeline* marked his debut with Coppin Repertory Theatre, where he performed the role of Omari.

**Larry Gill** (Assistant Lighting Designer) hails from Durham, North Carolina. He is a second year Urban Arts Theatre Design/Tech major. You can find him working behind-the-scenes. He has been a technician since the start of his high school career working on shows like *The Bodyguard*, *State of Urgency*, and *Mufaro’s Beautiful Daughters*. Most recently, Larry was the lighting board operator for the Coppin Rep’s production of *Broke-ology* and he served as the Assistant Stage Manager for *Pipeline* in the initial run at Coppin Rep.

**Paul Iroanya** (Assistant State Manager) is a native of Southern Maryland. He is a first-year Urban Arts Theatre Performance major making his Coppin Repertory Theatre debut. His professional goal is to become a film director.

**Katiana Ciceron** (Assistant State Manager) is a 21-year old transfer student and Urban Arts Theatre Performance major. She hails from Brooklyn, NY. While she has experience working as a co-director, assistant scenic artist, and other backstage roles, this production marks her first time serving as Assistant Stage Manager. Katiana looks forward to working on many future productions presented by Coppin Repertory Theatre.

## THE PROFILES

### THE CREATIVE TEAM

**James A. Brown (Projection Designer & Technical Director)** has served Coppin since 1995, designing lighting, sound, sets or video for numerous Coppin productions. He has also served as Technical Director for The Arena Players, Inc., where he occasionally performed as well. James has worked with The Mechanic Theatre, Center Stage, The Lyric Opera House, the Peabody Conservatory, The Black Theatre Network, and many other arts organizations. James mentors students in the NAACP ACT-SO Program while serving as the Baltimore Branch NAACP Secretary; is a member of the Drama Ministry at Mount Pleasant Church and Ministries and is married to Sharon Brown.

**Sharlene Michelle Clinton (Costume Designer)** Sharlene is a multi-talented artist, encompassing roles as a writer, singer-actor, dancer, accomplished costume designer, and skilled make-up artist. Her extensive portfolio includes being the driving force behind costume designs for various productions within esteemed institutions like Chesapeake Shakespeare Company, Fells Point Corner Theatre, The Strand Theatre, Single Carrot Theatre, Morgan State University's Fine and Performing Arts department, Coppin Repertory Theatre, and other prominent local theatres in the vibrant Baltimore Area.

**Garey A. Hyatt (Producer)**, is the 35th President of the National Association of Dramatic and Speech Arts (NADSA), the nation's oldest educational theatre association. He earned his B.A. in speech and theatre from Bowie State, M.A. in African American Literature (Drama) from North Carolina A&T and Ph.D. in Theatre/Arts Administration from Texas Tech University. His journey in higher education spans more than 35 years, with stops at North Carolina A&T, College of Charleston, Florida A&M University, University of Louisiana-Lafayette and Dillard University prior to his arrival at Coppin in 2005. He served as department chair from 2005 to 2014 and currently serves as Program Coordinator of the Visual and Performing Arts area.

**Amini Johari-Courts (Director Emerita)**, served Coppin's faculty from 1981 to 2013, directed more than 30 plays at Coppin and has directed and served on the Artistic Committee for The Arena Players, Inc. After more than 20 years of directing in Johnson Auditorium, she directed the inaugural production of Coppin's Theatre Lab, **The Colored Museum**. In 2012, she directed **From the Mississippi Delta**, which was selected for presentation at the KCACTF Fringe Festival at Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

## THE PROFILES

### THE CREATIVE TEAM (Continued)

**Willie O. Jordan (Director)** is an Assistant Professor of Theatre at Coppin. Over the last eleven years, his directing credits for Coppin Repertory Theatre include: *A Raising in the Sun*, *Tell Pharaoh*, *Homeplace*, *Under the Skin*, *You're A Good Man Charlie Brown*, *Zooman and the Sign*, *The Waiting Room*, *To Be Young Gifted and Black*, *Broke-ology*, *Blues for an Alabama Sky*, *Best of Enemies*, *The Colored Museum*, *The Meeting, for colored girls who have considered suicide when the rainbow is enuf* and *Pvt. Wars*. Jordan earned a B.A. in Education from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and the MFA in Directing from Virginia Tech.

**Michael D. Klima (Lighting Designer)** earned his BA in technical theatre from Appalachian State University and theatre design MFA from Brandeis University. He has designed lighting for over 120 professional productions in 15 states with companies including New England Conservatory, Merola Opera Program, Colorado Light Opera, Oberlin College, Eugene Opera (OR), Cleveland Institute of Music, Syracuse Opera, Opera Illinois, East Carolina University (NC), and Hartt School Music (CT), and has served as production manager or technical director of over 40 productions across the U.S. Since moving to Baltimore in 1999, he has designed productions for Towson University, Rep Stage, Everyman Theatre, UMBC, the Naval Academy, Annapolis Opera, Theatre Hopkins and Johns Hopkins University Theatre. For the last 10 years, Michael taught theatre at Towson University. He is now a proud technical theatre faculty member at Coppin State University.

**Azya Maxton (Dramaturg)** is an actress, writer and educator residing in Baltimore, MD. You can find her teaching college classes in speech and theater at Coppin State University, working on plays with middle school students through the Lyric Baltimore or bartending at Baltimore Center Stage. Her self-published works include *Goddess 'n the Game: A Poet's tale of Love and Recreation* (book, 2008), *Reasons 2 Live* (album, 2009), *This is How We Heal: The Obligatory Love Album* (book 2015), and *Before I Burn Out: Tales, Trials and Triumphs of a City School Teacher* (book, 2020).

**Jazmin Wright (Sound Designer/Sound Board Operator)** is a senior urban arts theatre major here at Coppin State University. This is her seventh show where she mostly worked backstage. Her production credits include the plays *Blues for an Alabama Sky*, *The Glass Managerie*, *Broke-ology*, *Pipeline*, and *Shakin the Mess Outta Misery*, and she served as stage manager for *The Colored Museum*. This production marks her debut as the Sound Designer/Sound Board Operator. She is excited to be given this opportunity and is extremely grateful.