



African-American Shakespeare Company

presents *William Shakespeare's*

OTHELLO

Directed by **Carl Jordan** • Starring **L. Peter Callender**

October 12–27

Marines' Memorial Theatre 609 Sutter Street, 2nd Floor, San Francisco
african-americanshakes.org • #OthelloAASC

 **bartable**

ABOUT THE COMPANY

African-American Shakespeare Company was established in 1994 to open the realm of classic theatre to a diverse audience; and provide an opportunity and place for actors of color to hone their skills and talent in mastering some of the world's greatest classical roles. We do this by producing work from the canon of classical theatre—including Shakespeare and great American and world playwrights—that is lively, entertaining, and relevant.

AFRICAN-AMERICAN SHAKESPEARE COMPANY

762 Fulton Street, Suite 306
San Francisco, CA 94102
african-americanshakes.org
415.762.2071

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DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Arise black vengeance from thy hollow hell!
Give up, oh love, your seat and precious throne
To tyrannous hate! Swell bosom from your weight,
For it is filled with aspics tongues!
Oh, blood, Iago, blood!

—Othello (III.3)

OTHELLO is one of four great Shakespearean tragedies. In this magnificent play, the Bard tackles huge issues of 'difference'—such as race and national origins, xenophobia, religious bigotry, misogyny, and jealousy!

The African-American Shakespeare Company's mission statement reflects and embraces the complexity of race that informs this magnificent and malevolent story!

The central themes and issues in OTHELLO are as vital today as they were when the play was written (circa 1603/4). Given the fact that these tragic and alarming issues are becoming increasingly relevant and an urgent story for our nation, we have decided to stage this production in our contemporary times.

The military serves as a central vehicle in framing these vital issues. Here, an army goes to battle only to find out that the war has already been won before it began. Sequestered in a stifflingly hot army base in the middle east, the agitated troops experience rising tension with no release in sight.

Othello, a man used to vicious fighting and bloody death since the age of seven, is this story's protagonist and the troops' general. In our production, Othello's backstory is that of a conscripted child soldier in Ethiopia by way of Sudan, who has used his learned violent skills and street smarts to rise to the top of the American military. Meanwhile, "honest Iago," his "loyal" friend, joined the service at the same time, but has only risen to the rank of sergeant, causing him to become increasingly jealous of his general.

...oh beware, my lord, of jealousy!

It is the Green-eyed monster which will mock the meat it feeds on! (III.3)

Shakespeare's OTHELLO is a cautionary tale for our times, and the Globe theater's original production was done mostly in contemporary dress and staging... of that time! Our production celebrates Shakespeare's glorious words with a modern, contemporary setting to explore the painfully relevant topic of society's polarizing struggle with difference.

—Carl Jordan

SPECIAL THANK YOU

Pacific Boy Choir Academy, Palo Alto Children's Theatre, GiGi Anber-Tasse, and Stephen Dietz



WHO'S WHO

CAST

OTHELLO	L. Peter Callender*
DESDEMONA	Isabel Siragusa
IAGO	Michael Ray Wisely*
CASSIO	Ariel Sandino
DUKE	Samira Mariama
BIANCA	Samira Mariama
EMILIA	Champagne Hughes
BRABANTIO	Gene Thompson
RODERIGO	Gabriel Ross
GRATIANO	Durand Garcia
LODOVICO	Stephen Dietz
MONTANO	Tyri Ballard

PRODUCTION TEAM

DIRECTOR	Carl Jordan
PRODUCTION MANAGER	Leontyne Mbele-Mbong
STAGE MANAGER	Elspeth Sweatman
SET DESIGNER	Cayla Ray-Perry
LIGHTING DESIGNER	Kevin Myrick
SOUND DESIGNER	Larry Tasse
COSTUME DESIGNER	Keri Fitch
PROP DESIGNER	Samira Mariama
CHOREOGRAPHER	Devin Parker Sullivan
FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHER	Durand Garcia
VOICE & TEXT COACH	Miriam Ani

Run time: Approximately 2 hours and 20 minutes with one 15 minute intermission

Photography and videography of the performance is prohibited.



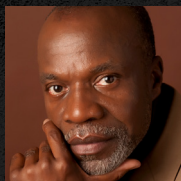
*Appearing through an Agreement between this theatre, African-American Shakespeare Company, and Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.



MEET THE CAST



TYRI BALLARD (MONTANO) is an actor/stuntman/fight coordinator who resides in the Bay Area by way of Omaha, Nebraska who is excited to be working with the African-American Shakespeare Company. Since 2004, Tyri has been involved in various forms of media, whether television, movies, radio or the internet and has used this experience to improve his multiple crafts.

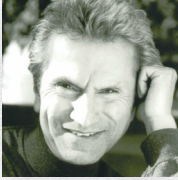


L. PETER CALLENDER* (OTHELLO) celebrates his 40th year as a proud member of Actors' Equity Association and is Artistic Director of the African-American Shakespeare Company. www.lpetercallender.com



STEPHEN DIETZ (LODOVICO) has been acting and designing sound in Bay Area theaters for over 30 years. A two-time winner of the San Francisco Bay Area Critics Circle Award for Sound Design, he feels both privileged and excited to be appearing with so many new friends in this very special production. His recent roles have included Trotter in the Ross Valley Players production of JOURNEY'S END; a drunken

whiskey salesman in *TAMING OF THE SHREW* at Marin Shakespeare Company and College of Marin; Monsieur Dindon, the ultra-conservative father, in Cinnabar Theater's *LA CAGE AUX FOLLES*; Mayor Shinn in The Mountain Play's presentation of *THE MUSIC MAN*; and Steve in the Sonoma Arts Live production of *BECKY'S NEW CAR*.



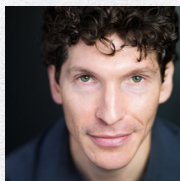
DURAND GARCIA (GRATIANO) is a newly minted film producer and content creator (MBA, St. John Paul the Great Catholic University). He is the co-founder of Luminarias Theatre Co., which was twice invited to perform at Center for the Arts Yerba Buena Gardens. He directed and/or produced for St. John's University, Luminarias, Dominican University, and African-American Shakespeare Company (AASC) among others. He began working as the resident Fight Choreographer for AASC in 1998. His articles regarding Stage Fighting safety have appeared in CineSource magazine, Theatre Bay Area magazine and the Society of American Fight Director's *The Cutting Edge*. He has worked on over one hundred and sixty stage fight projects for theatre and film. Luminarias Entertainment and Media Group is his independent film and television company.



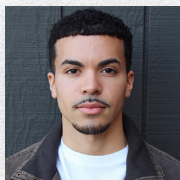
CHAMPAGNE HUGHES (EMILIA) is a Bay Area Artist, Actor, DJ, Theater Experience Expert, and Event Producer. This is her second show with the African-American Shakespeare Company (AASC). She played Banquo/Doctor in AASC's production of *MACBETH*. Other previous on stage credits include *CLYBOURNE PARK* at Altarena Theater; *ROMEO AND JULIET*, *LOWER DEPTHS*, *HOLY GHOST*, *A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE*, and *THIS LAND WAS MADE* at Ubuntu Theater; and *OTHELLO* [playing as Othello], *THE COLORED MUSEUM*, and *LYSISTRATA* at San Jose State, where she was awarded Best Actress in the short film *RENT*. Champagne also held management roles for American Conservatory Theater, The Flight Deck, Berkeley Repertory Theater, and Beach Blanket Babylon. As an administrator, and overall, her mission is to create social change within the statewide theater communities by constructing and integrating robust diversity initiatives in hopes of building a supportive working environment for all artists and administrators of color. www.djchampagne.com



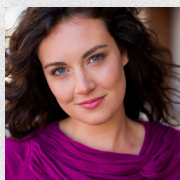
SAMIRA MARIAMA (DUKE + BIANCA) is a Bay Area Actress, Director, Teaching Artist, and Prop Designer. She is a Philadelphia native and has resided in the Bay Area for most of her life. She holds a B.A. in Anthropology and Theatre (Minor) from University of California Berkeley, receiving the Mask & Dagger Award for extraordinary contributions to theatre. She also holds a Certificate in Acting from American Conservatory Theater's Summer Training Congress. Recent acting credits include a four-character role in Jerry Levintin's *I'D KILL FOR A PARKING PLACE*, Lisa B. Productions' *GLOWN IN THE PRAYER CLOSET TOUR*, and Cutting Ball Theater's staged reading of Aurin Squire's *ZOOHOUSE*. Assistant Directing credits includes Thornton Wilder's *OUR TOWN* (Marin Academy) and James Ijames' *WHITE* (Shotgun Players). She feels blessed to be rejoining AASC as its Props Designer and, for the first time, as an actor! As always, she is grateful for God, her mother and her family!



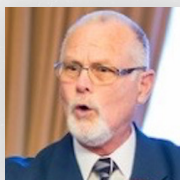
GABRIEL ROSS (RODERIGO) is thrilled to be back on stage with AASC. He played Flute/Thisby in *A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM* and the Duke in *CINDERELLA* both in the fall of 2017. Some other classical roles include the following: Antony in *JULIUS CAESAR* (Silicon Valley Shakespeare); Charles/Ladvenu in *SAINT JOAN* (Jewel Theatre); Torvald in *DOLL'S HOUSE* at Marin Onstage; Laucelot Gobbo in *MERCHANT OF VENICE* (Custom Made Theatre Company); Lennox in *MACBETH* at Town Hall Theatre; Edgar in *KING LEAR* and Geoffrey in *LION IN WINTER* (Festival Theatre Ensemble). He earned his MFA in Classical Acting from George Washington University.



ARIEL SANDINO (CASSIO) is an actor from Pittsburg, CA; and is currently a student at Diablo Valley College. Ariel is currently studying psychology, as well as theatre, hoping to one day incorporate the two in teaching dramatic-therapy. Ariel has a passion for motivational speaking, life-coaching, and couples therapy. Ariel has recently played: Lance Corp. Dawson in *A FEW GOOD MEN* for The Other Other Theatre Company; Flip in *OUR LADY OF 121ST STREET* for Diablo Valley College; and Mr. Wickham in *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE* for Poison Apple Productions. Ariel is excited to announce that he be playing The Gentleman Caller in *THE GLASS MENAGERIE* for Plotline Theatre Company. Ariel would like to thank his Mother and his closest friends for their unconditional love and support. He would also like to thank African-American Shakespeare Company for this wonderful opportunity.



ISABEL SIRAGUSA (DESDEMONA) is delighted to be making her African-American Shakespeare Company debut and is honored to be working with such talented artists. She has a degree in Theater from Yale University and has studied at the Moscow Art Theatre in Russia, Shakespeare & Company, and American Conservatory Theater. Favorite theatrical experiences include performing in *WILD BOY* (Dragon Productions Theatre), working with Clowns Without Borders in South Africa, and doing stand-up around the Bay. Isabel recently returned to California after living in the United Kingdom for a year and a half where she received her MBA at the University of Cambridge. She now spends her days combining theater and business by working as the Communications Manager at the Cal Shakes. www.isabelsiragusa.com



GENE THOMPSON (BRABANTIO) has performed in New York and Bay Area theatres for over 40 years, most recently playing General Lucas in African-American Shakespeare Company's production of *BLACK EAGLES*. Other local favorites include Ira in *ARRIVALS/DEPARTURES* (by Daniele Nathanson and Tania Katan), Dukes Frederick and Senior in *AS YOU LIKE IT* (Shakespeare), Chebutykin in *THREE SISTERS* (Chekhov), and Bob in the award-winning *SWIMMING IN THE SHALLOWS* (by Adam Bock), all at Shotgun Players; Skinner in *A-A-AMERICA*, (by Edward Bond) at

Crowded Fire; and Houdini in ROSABELLE-ANSWER-TELL (by Ellen Koivisto) at Theatre Artists' Conspiracy. But his signature role in the Bay Area will always be Senator Bob Packwood in John Warren's GROPING FOR JUSTICE, THE BOB PACKWOOD STORY, at Unconditional Theatre.



MICHAEL RAY WISELY* (IAGO) is honored to make his debut at African-American Shakespeare Company in OTHELLO. Michael Ray has worked professionally in the Bay Area and beyond for over 25 years. Recent roles include: Bottom in A MIDSUMMER NIGHTS DREAM for San Francisco Shakespeare Festival, Ray in BLACKBIRD for Pacific Repertory Theatre and Don in RAPTURE BLISTER BURN for Lucky Penny Productions. Off-Broadway, international, and regional credit includes: 59e59 Theaters (NYC), Teatro Santa Ana (SMA), Aurora Theatre Company, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, San Francisco Playhouse, Center Repertory, TheatreWorks, Marin Theatre Company, Magic Theatre, Marin Shakespeare Company, American Musical Theatre, and others. He has directed for film and theatre, recently directing MILLION DOLLAR QUARTET for Sierra Repertory Theatre. He has appeared in film, television, and radio and was the host of a series, HOME TRANSFORMATIONS, on the DIY Network. Michael Ray is a member of AEA and SAG*AFTRA. Find out more on www.michaelraywisely.com



MEET THE PRODUCTION TEAM



CARL JORDAN (DIRECTOR) is a freelance director and choreographer working and living in the Bay Area. He comes from a professional dance background and has degrees in Musical Theater, Dance and Drama. Carl has instructed theater at community colleges and served as artistic director for several theater companies. He is a four times Winner of the San Francisco Bay Area Theater Critics Circle Awards for Best Director, and Best Choreographer and has received the award for Best Entire Production Award, as well as numerous nominations. He is also a two time Winner of the Theater Bay Area Best Director Award, and also has received the Theatre Bay Area Best Overall Production as well as Best Ensemble Awards. He has twice been rewarded the Marquee Journalists Award for Direction / Outstanding Production. He is the sole proprietor of Kick and a Giggle Productions, light and set design, and build, and he has served as technical director for multiple companies.



LEONTYNE MBELE-MBONG (PRODUCTION MANAGER) is in her fourth season with the African-American Shakespeare Company as Production Manager. She is the founder of CogentOAK, a virtual admin business that provides administrative assistance. Prior to starting her own business, Leontyne worked for 10 years at an engineering consultant firm, working her way from temporary receptionist to business development coordinator. The customer service skills she learned in her first job as travel agent fresh out of college, she now puts to use at the American Conservatory Theater box office, and at various theaters across the city where she can be seen working front of house. The over-arching theme of this patchwork is assisting people with just what they need to do what they desire hassle-free—be it seeing a show or working on the aspect of the budding business they love. She even creates websites! Check hers out at www.cogentoak.com.



ELSPETH SWEATMAN (STAGE MANAGER) is a dramaturg who currently works as American Conservatory Theater's publications associate. She is a graduate of the University of Denver (BA in English and Music) and the University of Glasgow (MLitt in playwriting and dramaturgy). Her previous stage management experience includes MACBETH (African-American Shakespeare Company); 4,000 MILES (Cadence Theatre Company); and ORLANDO (A.C.T. Fellows Project). She is excited to be back at African-American Shakespeare Company.



CAYLA RAY-PERRY (SET DESIGNER) comes to African-American Shakespeare Company for the first time from the South Bay. She has a BFA in Theatre Design and Production (2014) from Central Washington University. Around the country, Cayla has completed contracts with organizations such

as the Seattle Repertory Theatre, the Cincinnati Opera, Utah Shakespeare Festival, and SeaWorld. In 2017, Cayla returned to the bay full time, where she was recently married to the best wife she could ask for, and worked with local companies such as The San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Company (Props), Cabrillo Stage (Props), Brava (Teaching Artist) and the Palo Alto Children's Theatre (Scenic Art/Teaching Artist). In her free time, Cayla enjoys embroidery, producing public art, and dabbling in graphic design and photography. You can see Cayla's work in Custom Made Theatre Company's BLOODY BLOODY ANDREW JACKSON now through October 27th. www.scenicartbycayla.com



KEVIN MYRICK (LIGHTING DESIGNER) has worked in theatre since 1968 as a theatrical designer, technical director and multimedia artist. He studied technical theatre at San Francisco State University, and has most recently designed for the African-American Shakespeare Company (MACBETH), TheatreFirst (THE LAST SERMON OF SISTER IMANI), Lorraine Hansberry Theatre Company (URBAN RETREAT), Throckmorton Theatre (RAGTIME) and Youth Musical Theatre Company (A MAN OF NO IMPORTANCE).



LARRY TASSE (SOUND DESIGNER) is thrilled to be the Sound Designer on his first production with the African-American Shakespeare Company. Larry began his Performing, Songwriting, and Composing career in Tin Pan Alley, NYC working as a Staff Songwriter and Musician. He was discovered by a Rock and Roll manager who put him to work as a Songwriter/Composer/Pianist/Mime in an Art Rock band called The Hello People. Yes Google! The band appeared on the TONIGHT SHOW, THE SMOTHERS BROTHERS COMEDY HOUR, THE MIDNIGHT SPECIAL and performed at Carnegie Hall, Radio City Music Hall, and the Fillmore's East and West while constantly touring the U.S. His music has been heard on two soundtracks which almost summed up his career, ALMOST FAMOUS and 6 FEET UNDER. He was a House Sound Designer and Music Composer for the Broadhollow Regional Theatres in New York. His San Francisco Sound Design and Music Composition credits include FAHRENHEIT 451, THE GOAT, LAUGHING WILD, THE PRIDA PROJECT, and THE BIRTHDAY LOTTERY. Larry wishes to thank his gifted wife GiGi and their courageous cat Zule for their continued support and love.



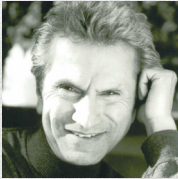
KERI FITCH (COSTUME DESIGNER) has been a Costume Director/Costume Shop Manager for: The Western Stage at Hartnell College, Solano College Theater, Berkeley Repertory Theater, California Shakespeare Theater and Boise State University. Her costume designs have been seen onstage at Berkeley Repertory Theater, San Francisco Shakespeare Festival, The Western Stage, African-American Shakespeare Company, B Street Theater, Golden Threads Productions, The New Conservatory Theater Center, BCT, and Boise State University. Recent designs include DON GIOVANNI and MANON for Opera Idaho and MACBETH for African-American Shakespeare Company. She received a 2018 Theater Bay Area Award for Outstanding Costume Design for WHEN PIGS FLY at New Conservatory Theater

Center in San Francisco. Keri makes her home in the Boise Area where she is the Costume Director for Ballet Idaho.



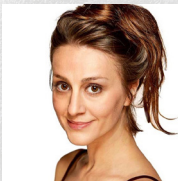
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MIRIAM ANI (VOICE & TEXT COACH) is delighted to be able to support African-American Shakespeare Company as a voice and text coach for this production of OTHELLO. A Bay Area actor, director, and educator, she is a past company member of Hedgerow Theatre, where credits include Ariel in THE TEMPEST and Rose in A HOTEL ON MARVIN GARDENS (dir. Nagle Jackson). She originated the lead in the world premiere

of Jim Knable's GREEN MAN (Stages Theatre, LA) and is distinguished as an original cast member in the published Samuel French version of the playscript. Since relocating to the Bay Area, Miriam has performed with Lorraine Hansberry Theatre, San Francisco Shakespeare Festival, California Shakespeare Theater, Livermore Shakespeare Festival, and Half Moon Bay Shakespeare among others. She directed THE CRUCIBLE for Pacifica Spindrift Players and THE HALLELUJAH GIRLS for North Bay Stage Company. Miriam currently teaches acting and voice for Cal State East Bay and Berkeley Repertory Theatre and is a proud KCACTF respondent, TBA adjudicator, and member of AEA. MFA, Acting, CUNY Brooklyn College. www.miriamani.com



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Shakespeare famously wrote, “Neither a borrower nor a lender be,” for his play HAMLET. The bard’s financial advice may still be sound all these years later, but what has he to say about being a donor? Thankfully for us, nothing.

With that in mind, we at the African-American Shakespeare Company would like to humbly ask for your help and support this year as we kick off our 25th Anniversary season! We have a very exciting season planned, with a full run of shows spanning the full range of the classics to the new classics, plus raffles, giveaways, and more!

We have also started a new youth outreach program, called PEER, aimed at engaging with the young people in our community to foster a love of theatre and performance arts. In this spirit, we are introducing our brand-new Youth Pass this season, which will offer season passes to young people at a highly discounted rate. We hope this will open our mission of “Envisioning the classics with color,” to a generation which lacks exposure to theatre, perhaps instilling in them a love of performance and storytelling, maybe even inspiring them to continue our mission into the future.

We are so delighted that you chose to join us this evening, thank you! Your support of our performances is the most essential ingredient in the continuation of our mission, and we are deeply grateful for your attendance. So with that, please, enjoy the show!!!

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Sherri Y". A long, thin white line extends from the end of the signature towards the right, pointing towards the portrait of Sherri Young.

Sherri Young
Founder &
Executive Director



THANK YOU DONORS

African-American Shakespeare Company is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization funded in part by the San Francisco Arts Commission; San Francisco Grants for the Arts; the California Arts Council, a state agency; Shakespeare for a New Generation, a national program of the National Endowment for the Arts in cooperation with Arts Midwest; and Bay Area Rapid Transit. This is a partial list of donors from July 2015 to August 2019.



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