



African-American Shakespeare Company
presents

CINDERELLA

Directed by Sherri Young

*“A Black-Girl-Positive
‘Cinderella’”*

—KQED Arts

“Hilarious”

—San Francisco Chronicle

Dec 20–22

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#CinderellaAASC

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AFRICAN-AMERICAN SHAKESPEARE COMPANY

YEARS of ENVISIONING THE CLASSICS WITH COLOR 1994-2019

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

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#CinderellaAASC





director's note



I always wonder if this is the year when we have tapped out the production of *Cinderella*. I'm always looking for the next new thing year after year and questioning is there no more to say and has everyone seen this show already? I love watching the audiences and the families that come; little girls in tutus; and grown women in gowns. *Cinderella* is an elegant event that is meant for the community.

But this Summer, I met a special person in the community attending an outdoor event. Behind a desk in the outdoor evening air, a tall lengthy older gentleman, dressed all in black with long fingers and expressive hands stopped me for a conversation. He wore a dark cap and his eyes were covered from shaded sunglasses even though the sun had already left for the day and the late afternoon winds were picking up. I could tell he was an old-timer, a character from the neighborhood who I recognized by sight, but never got his name. After chatting about the basic event we found ourselves at, he said, "you do the *Cinderella* shows!" with such excitement that I was surprised. He wasn't our normal target audience, but he had a thrill in his voice and said, "I just love that message at the end of the show. It touched my heart 'I found my voice.'" And as he was recalling *Cinderella*'s lines to me, his tall fingers clutched his heart and tears began dripping from beneath his sunglasses.

We still do *Cinderella* after all these years because of the message. We're not just reaching the kids, but we are reaching all the kids at heart — no matter the age.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sherri Young". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping underline.

Sherri Young

who's who

cast

<i>Cinderella</i>	Funmi Lola
<i>Prince Charming</i>	Devin A. Cunningham
<i>Evil Stepmother</i>	Alison Whismore
<i>Shaniqua</i>	Ambioris Bautista-Garcia
<i>Zonita</i>	Donald Ray Antoine
<i>Duke</i>	Ron Chapman
<i>Father</i>	Ron Chapman
<i>Page</i>	Jazz Amira Hardriet Angelia Richardson
<i>Fairy Godmother</i>	Brittany Nicole Sims
<i>Grandmother</i>	Jan Hunter
<i>Shayla</i>	Madeline Lillie Flemings Zoe M. Howard
<i>Sherena</i>	Khalia Kamau Miel Kelley
<i>Young Cinderella</i>	Samai Asefaw-Landry Omega Menen Harris
<i>Ensemble — Lady #1</i>	Monique Quevedo
<i>Ensemble — Lady #2</i>	Natalie Fong
<i>Ensemble — Lady #3</i>	Jazara Metcalf

production team

<i>Director</i>	Sherri Young
<i>Production Manager</i>	Leontyne Mbele-Mbong
<i>Stage Manager</i>	Devin Parker Sullivan
<i>Technical Director</i>	Kevin Myrick
<i>Lighting Designer</i>	Kevin Myrick
<i>Costume Designer</i>	Rene Walker
<i>Choreographer</i>	Raissa Simpson
<i>Choreographer</i>	Jose Antonio
<i>Music Director</i>	Mitch Galli

Run time: Approximately 2 hours with one 15 minute intermission
Photography and videography of the performance is prohibited.

meet the cast



Funmi Lola | *Cinderella*

Funmi Lola is a singer, actress, and CPA from Nigeria by way of Jamaica and Arkansas. She is extremely thrilled to be working on *Cinderella* with the African-American Shakespeare Company! This will be her second play with the company; she was last seen as Woman+ in the company's production of *Macbeth* last season and has been featured in a couple of short films in the Bay Area. Though the bulk of her education has been in accounting, she has some formal training in theater from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville and her heart has never left the stage. She loves her day job as a consultant at a financial services firm in San Francisco and is currently working to make acting a bigger part of her life.



Devin A. Cunningham | *Prince Charming*

Devin A. Cunningham is an actor and singer from Oakland, CA and he is excited to work with African-American Shakespeare Company. Devin studied acting on California's central coast at PCPA—Professional Actor Training Program. Devin made his debut with AASC in their original production of *Cinderella* in the role of Shaniqua, the stepsister. Other credits include: Lord Mayor/Lord Grey, *Richard III*; Officer Lockstock, *Urinetown the Musical*; Ensemble, *Cinderella*; Ensemble, *The Pirates of Penzance*.



Alison Whismore | *Evil Stepmother*

Alison Whismore is ecstatic to be returning to AASC to reprise the role of the stepmother! Prior to immigrating to the US in 2010, she toured France doing interactive theater, mostly working in schools and other community organizations. Recent credits: *This Side of Crazy* at New Conservatory Theatre Center, *Church and Transfers* at Crowded Fire Theater, *Shotz & Longshotz* with Amios West, *Measure for Measure* at Theatre Lunatico. Locally, she has also worked with Livermore Shakespeare Festival, SF Shakes, Pear Theater, and Ross Valley Players. She is also a Teaching Artist working with several Bay Area theaters & is an instructor with Exec/Comm based out of New York. www.alisonwhismore.com



**Ambioris
Bautista-
Garcia |
*Shaniqua***

Ambioris Bautista-Garcia is from

Loiza, Puerto Rico. He is a working actor that recently moved to the Bay Area. Currently he is a full time student in his senior year at the Academy of Art University. He also works for a non-profit, Hands on Bay Area. He helps the Bay Area become a better place with the volunteering events he leads. He is making his debut with the African-American Shakespeare Company as one of the Stepsisters in *Cinderella*. He is very excited, and pumped for the role. Previous credits include: *In the Heights* where he was in the Ensemble and *Six Degree of Separation*. Ambioris has an extravagant passion for art, he likes to do it all. Not only does he act, he loves to draw, paint, and photography.



**Donald Ray
Antoine |
*Zonita***

Donald Ray Antoine is a actor, writer, dancer, and director from the Bay

Area, and is very excited and honored to be working with the African-American Shakespeare Company again! He is a graduate of the Performing Arts Academy at Skyline High School. He recently appeared in AASC's *Black Eagles* (Buddy). Donald's credits include: *Grease* (Danny Zuko), *Zooman and The Sign* (Reuben Tate), *Bugsy Malone* (Bugsy Malone), and *Bury the Dead* (First Soldier). He studied at the Berkeley Repertory School of Theatre for many seasons and has appeared professionally in It.Is.

Productions' *Best.Worst.Best* and Disney's *High School Musical*, and has served Assistant Director to Yes Theater's production of *Journey to the End of the Earth*. Donald has a passion for community service, performing arts education/funding, and Christian Mime Dance.



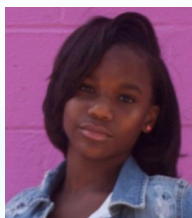
Ron Chapman | *Duke & Father*

Ron Chapman is an actor who believes in the power and necessity of storytelling. He is thrilled to be working with the African-American Shakespeare Company again. He last appeared as Gentleman Lili in San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Company's *Death and the Artist*.



Jazz Amira Hardriet | *Page*

Jazz Amira Hardriet is a ten year old 5th grade student at Joaquin Miller Elementary school. She is enrolled in the Musical Theatre program and has been cast as Jasmine in their upcoming production of *Aladdin*. Jazz is thrilled to once again be in the cast of *Cinderella*. At the age of six she played young Cinderella, at the age of eight she played the role of Sherena and at nine she played Shayla. She loves the experience of being on stage and dreams of being a Professional Performing Artist and a pediatrician who discovers the cure for Sickle Cell. At seven, she was cast as Simba in 3Crosse's production of *The Lion King*. In addition, she played the Monkey and a street urchin in *Aladdin* at the R.T. Farnsworth theatre. She also played little Magic in *Dreamgirls*, a NYC street kid in *Rent*, and a Parisian Child in *Funny Face*. Jazz studies Ballet, Martial Arts, Gymnastics, African Dance, and she sings in the Oakland Interfaith Youth Choir. Jazz is in eager anticipation of visiting Paris, France this year for the first time. She will travel to Costa Rica in January for a cultural exchange singing for Jesus.



Angelia Richardson | *Page*

Angelia Richardson is a 13 year old from San Francisco, and is very excited to be working with the African-American Shakespeare Company for another season! An 8th grader at Oakland School for the Arts, Angelia has studied contemporary dance, ballet, and theater for the past three years there. She studied briefly at the American Conservatory Theater, where she was cast as Aunt George in the play, *The Poet and the Rent*. Angelia is bilingual in English and Spanish. She was in competitive gymnastics from age five to ten, competing with American Gymnastics Club and Acro-Sports. At age 12 she joined Acro-Sports Circus Troupe where she learned Aerial Lyra—an act popularized by Cirque du Soleil, performed on a steel ring suspended in the air. Angelia has performed in the last five annual productions of *Cinderella*. Angelia loves acting and has a passion for performing arts. She is very excited to take on a new role this year as the Page.



Brittany Nicole Sims | *Fairy Godmother*

Brittany Nicole Sims is an actress and Bay Area Native from San Leandro, CA and is thrilled to be working with AASC as the Fairy Godmother. Brittany was recently Lady In Green in AASC's production of *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf*. Brittany received her B.A. in Theater Arts from Sacramento State University. Brittany has had the pleasure of working with All Terrain

Theater, Inferno Theater, Those Women Productions, The SF Olympians Festival, Playwrights Center of SF, Ubuntu Theater, The Exit Theater, Custom Made Theater, B8 Theater, and 6th Street Playhouse. Brittany would like to thank her family and friends for all their love and support, especially her mom, sister and grandma. She says, "Enjoy this beautiful performance of love and magic."



Jan Hunter | *Grandmother*

Jan Hunter is truly excited to return to the African-American Shakespeare Company stage, recently appeared as Lady in Brown in Ntozake Shange's *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf*, nominated by Theatre Bay Area Awards for Outstanding Ensemble Production. She played the Grandmother in AASC's production of *Cinderella* 2018, also as Ms. Ruth and the nurse

in *A Streetcar Named Desire*. She's previously performed in AASC's production as Jocasta in *Oedipus*, Lady Teazle in *School for Scandal*, and Ms. Higgins in *Pygmalion*. She now sits on the Board of Directors for the Lorraine Hansberry Theatre and will be directing *Intimate Apparel* for their 2019–2020 season. Jan Hunter was born and raised in Los Angeles and was one of the Original Soul Train dancers, and made commercials for Johnson and Johnson Hair care products during this time. She received her B.A. in Drama, M.A. in Education, and M.A. in Teacher of the Arts. She is a newly retired Theatre Educator, serving 40 years to youths. She was the Director of Performing Arts at Skyline High School for 24 years; teaching, directing and producing huge shows. Jan works with Stagebrige in the Bay area, does Dramatic Storytelling at different schools in the Bay area for youths. Jan considers this opportunity as a blessing, her "Encore Career", to continue to make art, to do what she does and loves. Jan appreciates her family and community for their loving support always.



Madeline Lillie Flemings | *Shayla*

Madeline Lillie Flemings is excited to be cast in the African-American Shakespeare Company's *Cinderella*. She lives in San Francisco and is in the second grade at Guidepost Montessori in Yerba Buena. Madeline has performed in multiple musicals with the Bay Area Children's Theatre and the Performing Arts Academy of Marin. She loves to sing and dance (ballet, contemporary, tap, flamenco and hip-hop) and has a passion for

finding solutions to end plastic pollution and global warming.



Zoe M. Howard | *Shayla*

Zoe M. Howard is a 6th grader at Head Royce Middle School in Oakland, California. She loves school, volleyball, music, dance, and theater. Zoe plays violin and clarinet. She has performed in lead and supporting roles in various plays at her school and community theater. She has been acting since the age of 6, and her favorite role was playing Captain Hook in the play *Peter Pan*. Recently, Zoe had an opportunity to perform

in an actor's showcase at Warner Brother Studios in Los Angeles, where she met young actors from across the country and the world. She loves to make videos, write books, draw and enjoys hanging with her friends. Zoe is excited and thankful for the opportunity to perform with the African-American Shakespeare Company this season.



Khalia Kamau | *Sherena*

Khalia Kamau is nine years old and currently enrolled at Eldorado Elementary as a third grader. Khalia loves to play basketball and is a dancer with Destiny Arts since the age of three. She appreciates her family for giving her this opportunity to be in *Cinderella*.



Samai Asefaw-Landry | *Young Cinderella*

Samai Asefaw-Landry was born in Oakland, California, and is residing in the Fillmore district of San Francisco, California. She has been performing since the young age of two, singing and dancing for friends and family. Samai started acting in school plays during her preschool years and has a love for connecting with the audience. Samai is currently a first-grader at Presidio Hill School and is expanding her passion for the

arts as she studies the guitar and piano. Samai is thrilled to be playing Young Cinderella in the African-American Shakespeare Company's 2019/2020 production of *Cinderella*.



Omega Menen Harris | *Young Cinderella*

Omega Menen Harris is a girl that loves singing and acting. She lives in the Bay Area, and is very excited to be working with the African-American Shakespeare Company! She is a homeschooler, and takes STEM science class at Green Scholars Program as well as the West Valley School of Dance. After appearing in *Alice and Wonderland*, she returned this year for the *Wizard of Oz* tryouts and is now performing

in the Disney show *Frozen*. Omega has a passion for socializing and the performing arts, and is heavily involved with singing for her church choir. Early this year Omega did a solo dance performance of *Lion King* at an Kwanzaa event that she has attended at the African Community House.



Monique Quevedo | *Ensemble — Lady #1*

Monique Quevedo is a dancer from San Jose. From her 20 years of training and competing; ballroom, tap, and hip hop have been her favorite. Performing in *Cinderella* brings some firsts for her. This is her first time working in San Francisco and with the African-American Shakespeare Company. She is elated to be working with this amazing cast and grateful for the new opportunities this has brought her.



Natalie Fong | *Ensemble — Lady #2*

Natalie Fong is excited for her African-American Shakespeare Company debut! Dancing from the age of seven, she has been performing professionally around the Bay Area since she was eight years old with the Oakland Ballet, Woodminster, PCRT, and the Tap Dancing Christmas Trees. She graduated from UC Irvine in 2015 with a degree in Psychology and Gender Studies and now works in Arts Marketing.

She says thank you to her parents and friends for all of their never-ending love and support. She will next be seen in PCRT's production of *West Side Story* in January and February.



Jazara Metcalf | *Ensemble — Lady #3*

Jazara Metcalf celebrates her 15th year with the African-American Shakespeare Company (*Romeo & Juliet*, *Cinderella*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, and *A Comedy of Errors*). Currently, she is a student attending UC Berkeley majoring in Planetary Science and minoring in Theater. As a Youth Programs Assistant for the California Academy of Science, she is always looking for ways to partner science and theater. Jazara would like to thank God for all her blessings and her parents for their love, commitment, and constant reminders that the power of Black Girl Magic is in the hard work you put into making your dreams come true.



meet the production team



Sherri Young | *Director*

Sherri Young is an M.F.A. graduate from the American Conservatory Theatre; and former Commissioner for the San Francisco Arts Commission proudly serving for Mayor Gavin Newsom. She founded the African-American Shakespeare Company in 1994 and has been its Executive Director ever since. Sherri has directed over 16 productions; produced and executed four programs for the organization; and speaks at various colleges, universities, and conferences across the nation. She manages approximately 60 company members and volunteers for the organization's programs. Some career highlights includes creating the company's signature holiday performance Cinderella, effectively building and stabilizing the organization over the past five years, increasing audience attendance by 30%, and increasing new funding support by foundations and individual donors within the past two years.



Leontyne Mbele-Mbong | *Production Manager*

Leontyne Mbele-Mbong 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.



Kevin Myrick | *Technical Director & Lighting Designer*

Kevin Myrick 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 (*Othello* and *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*).



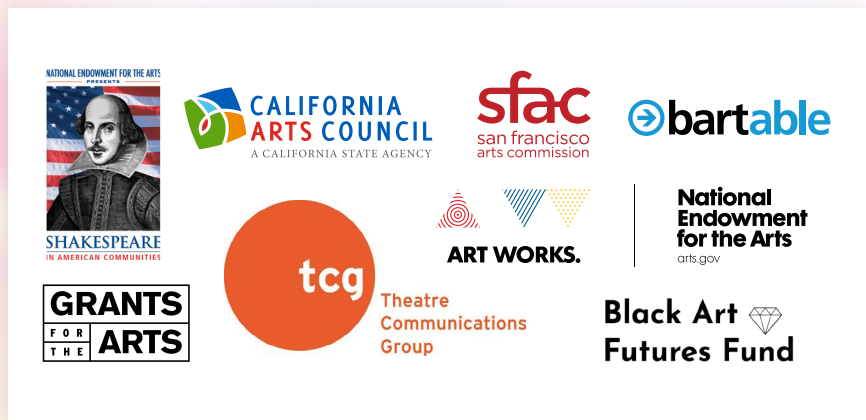
Raissa Simpson | *Choreographer*

Raissa Simpson is an award-winning choreographer and the artistic director of the San Francisco based dance company, PUSH. This is her second time working with African-American Shakespeare Company. Raissa has danced for Robert Moses Kin and Joanna Haigood, among others. Hailed by Dance Spirit Magazine as “Reflective Contemporary Choreography,” Raissa Simpson has presented her works at Ferst Center in Atlanta, Joyce SoHo in New York, Washington Ensemble Theater, Evolve Dance Festival in NY, Los Angeles Theater Center, Black Choreographers Festival, Renberg Theater, Links Hall in Chicago and Dance St Louis. She studied at the conservatory of dance at Purchase College in New York; and recently received her MFA in Dramatic Art. Raissa has received the Magrit Mondavi Award, Grants for the Arts, Zellerbach Family Foundation, San Francisco Arts Commission and AATAIN in association with the Hewlett Foundation to name a few. Raissa would like to thank her husband for his loving support and her amazing cast for all their hard work.



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- Participation in Artistic Council Meeting
- Personal Thank You call for your support

Friends (up to \$50)

- Subscription to “From the Desk of...” a personal quarterly email from L. Peter Callender and Sherri Young
- Invitation to Annual Season Launch Event
- Your name listed on production programs and website