



*Theatre*OCU

PRESENTS

BLACK GIRL, INTERRUPTED

BY

LYANISHA R. GONZALEZ

DIRECTED BY

W. JEROME STEVENSON

SCENIC DESIGN
RICK REEVES

COSTUME DESIGN
GABRIELA BASTIDAS

LIGHTING DESIGN
JACK BECKEY

SOUND DESIGN
DILYNN STOVALL

DIGITAL MEDIA DESIGN
RICK REEVES

STAGE MANAGER
ELIANA PEREZ

BURG THEATRE

Friday, February 12, 2021 at 8:00PM

Saturday, February 13, 2021 at 8:00PM

CAST



Angeli
Peña



Tíonna
Bell



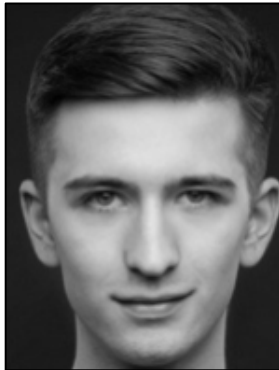
Deanna
Cooper



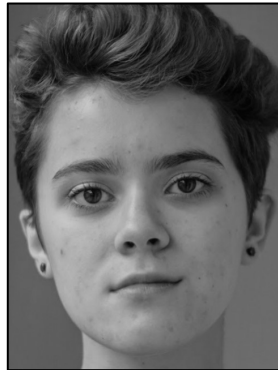
Karam
Alkhatib



Casey
Kassal



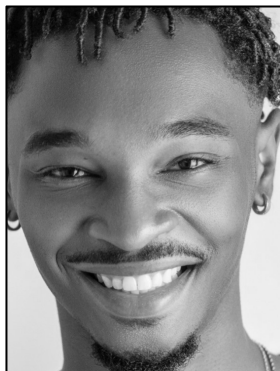
Trevor
Rau



Meredith
England



Cameron
Brown



Darius
Freeman



Grayson
Fontana-Harless



Aaron
Bates

CAST

Riley Jones Angeli Peña

Sasha Green Tiónna Bell

Col. Joan Moore Deanna Cooper

Sidney Karam Alkhatib

Dr. Lanham Casey Kassal

Masked Man Trevor Rau

Terri Meredith England

Kofi Cameron Brown

Mr. Green Darius Freeman

Masked Men Grayson Fontana-Harless, Aaron Bates

PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTE

I began writing this play in the Fall of 2017 after stumbling across a documentary trailer on Facebook. It was for the film *The Silent Truth*, which detailed the rape and murder of Private First Class LaVena Johnson. She was stationed in Iraq on an American Military Base during the war in 2005. She never made it home. She was nineteen years old. I was more than shocked and surprised when I first heard the story—not because the brutality wielded against her body was egregious in scope and depravity, and certainly not because such violence against bodies like hers (Black and female) are new or out of the ordinary; but because of the overwhelming national silence about what happened to her. Around the time of LaVena's murder, the media was relaying stories about Johnny Walker Linde, the American Jihadist, and Pat Tillman and Jessica Lynch...but nothing about LaVena, an active-duty soldier who lost her life under dubious and curious circumstances, while on an American Military Base. As the granddaughter of two proud World War II veterans and the niece of a Vietnam Veteran and the friend of many active duty and retired military, law enforcement, and government professionals, this was unacceptable to me. So, I sought a way to use my limited talents to try and correct this miscarriage of justice. I want to highlight this tragedy and give dignity and agency to a young woman who was so heinously betrayed by her fellow soldiers in arms, as well as by the Army she served in, and the country she fought for. Her story has been dramatized in this play to allow for creative license in crafting a work of theatrical fiction, however, the essence of her story remains intact. This was the only way I could give justice, peace, and solace to a young woman on the cusp of a destiny that will forever remain un-lived and unfulfilled. So tonight, as the wonderful cast and crew put their talent and polish on this production, I hope that you will remember the woman behind the play. Her name is LaVena Johnson and this is for her.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

There is nothing quite like digging into a new play. The gifted playwright has the uncanny ability to engage and entertain us all while holding a mirror to us and asking us to reflect on who we are and how we can grow and change the society within which we live. Combine the writer's skills with the talent of designers and technicians, the world of a play can thrust you into some new experience that commands your time and attention. Still, with all these gifted artists working to divert you, the job of bringing the play and its characters to life; of finding the hidden truth that connects the audience to one another in our humanity, belongs to the actor. In this production, I have been blessed with a company of hungry and gifted young artists; each wholeheartedly committed to bringing this story to the stage and, through the power of technology, into your homes. I am so grateful to have shared this experience with all these extraordinary artists and technicians who braved the unknown to bring this story to your attention.

With *Black Girl, Interrupted*, our gifted playwright, LyaNisha R. Gonzalez has trained her keen eyes and ears (and, hopefully, yours) on the heinous violence that has far too often claimed the lives of brave American soldiers. In 2018, a Pentagon survey showed that the number of sexual assaults in the military had risen to 20,500. These soldiers are our sisters and brothers, our mothers and fathers, our wives, husbands, and our friends, and they committed their lives in service of our country and its freedoms. Far too many of our soldiers have reported enduring such acts of violence and cowardice and yet far too many of their stories remain virtually unknown to us.

Black Girl, Interrupted doesn't merely ask us to face this difficult truth but to posit why such a systemic failure could be allowed to continue without eliciting our collective outrage and move us to action. We enjoy the blanket of freedom provided for us by soldiers of every race, creed, religion, orientation, identity, and gender. Surely, it is our duty to serve and see them all.

Thank you, LyaNisha, for helping us to See Them,

W. Jerome Stevenson
Director

DESIGN & PRODUCTION TEAM

Director W. Jerome Stevenson*
Assistant Director..... Anna Luczynski
Stage Manager Eliana Perez
Assistant Stage Managers..... Lili Forest, Laura Krus
Scenic/Digital Media Design Rick Reeves
Associate Scenic/Digital Media Design..... Tan Neeno
Lighting Design Jack Beckey
Assistant Lighting Design Kennedy Nichols
Costume Design Gabriela Bastidas
Assistant Costume Design Sarah Martin
Sound Design Dilynn Stovall
Properties Supervisor..... Carlee Robertson
Technical Director Andy Wilding
Production Electrician/Programmer..... Clara Wiebe
Costume Technicians Gabriela Bastidas, Anna Cantu,
Meredith England, Maya Ferrer-Toolsie, Madeleine Pugh,
Emma Hendren, Sydnee Lasseigne, Maxwell McIntire,
Tan Neeno, Erin Wilson, Emily Zimmerman, Liz Farrow
Wardrobe Crew HeadKatie Hartigan
Wardrobe Crew Michael Jobe, Kat Sweeney,
Courtney Conatser, Emerson Stack
Shop Carpenters, Props, and PaintersEmorie Mansur, Jo Muscarella,
Tan Neeno, Courtney Quinn, Tam Ransford,
Carlee Robertson, Dilynn Stovall, Katelyn Walp,
Clara Wiebe, Andy Wilding
Shop Electricians.....Jack Beckey, Graham Darnell, Preston Hunt,
Kennedy Nichols, Clara Wiebe, Andy Wilding
Light Board Operator..... Lauren McPherson
Sound Board OperatorSadie Koopman
Projections.....Anna Cantu
Run Crew Eli Nash
Props Arden Hearne

DESIGN & PRODUCTION STAFF

Head of Design and Production..... Jason Foreman+
Production Manager Jeff Cochran*
Technical Operations Manager James A. Stuhlmiller
Technical Director Brian Coleman
Interim Master Electrician David Jensen
Scenic Charge Artist..... Kalani Lewis, Meghan Buchanan
Scenic Technicians Larry Huffman, Matt Dorman
Costume Shop Supervisor LeeAnne Metzger
Cutter/Draper..... Christi Coufal-Tuya
Stitcher Natalie Jacobson
Costume Rental CoordinatorMariah Bowen
Properties Design SupervisorLarry Heyman

**Denotes a member of Actors' Equity Association*

+Denotes a member of United Scenic Artists, Local USA 829

BIOS

ANGELI PEÑA (Riley Jones) is a sophomore BFA Acting major from Miami, FL. Recent credits include *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, *RENT*, and *Love and Information*. Angeli would like to thank her family and friends for all of their love and support.

TIÓNNA BELL (Sasha Green) is a freshman Music Theatre & Vocal Performance double major. She is very grateful to be making her mainstage debut. Tíonna would like to thank her family, especially her mom; her friends for all their support; and the cast and crew of *Black Girl, Interrupted* for this rewarding experience.

DEANNA COOPER (Col. Jean Moore) is a junior BFA Acting major from Colorado Springs, CO. Recent credits include *The Women of Lockerbie* (Hattie), *Cymbeline* (Queen), *Phedre* (Panope), and *Keep Me in Mind* (Young Alice). She would like to thank Jerome and the entire BGI team for fostering such an impactful process. Deanna would also like to thank her friends and family for their continual love and support. She hopes that you enjoy the show.

KARAM ALKHATIB (Sidney) is a junior BFA Acting major from Tulsa, OK. Recent credits include *Woe is Me* and *Friends with Guns*. He would like to thank his friends, family, and the School of Theatre faculty for their love and support.

CASEY KASSAL (Dr. Lanham) is a junior BFA Acting major with a minor in Directing from Flower Mound, TX. Recent credits include *Arcadia*, *Our Town*, and *Exit, Pursued by a Bear*. He would like to thank the cast and crew for this amazing experience and his family and friends for their constant love and support.

TREVOR RAU (Masked Man) is a sophomore BFA Acting major from Spokane, WA, and he is so grateful to be able to work and produce theatre in such a unique time. A massive thank you to the School of Theatre faculty for doing everything in their power to ensure our continued growth as artists, and to Jerome for allowing him to be a part of telling this story.

MEREDITH ENGLAND (Terri), junior BFA Acting major from Houston, TX, is excited to be back on the TheatreOCU mainstage. Recent credits include *Cymbeline*, *Men on Boats*, and *Woe is Me*. She would like to thank her family, Megan, and Cricket for supporting her.

CAMERON BROWN (Kofi) is a sophomore BFA Acting major from McKinney, TX. Recent credits include *The Addams Family* (Gomez Addams), *Sweet Nothing in My Ear* (Dan Miller), and *Twelfth Night* (Malvolio). He would like to thank the TheatreOCU family for embracing him with open arms.

DARIUS FREEMAN (Mr. Green) is a senior BFA Acting major from Grand Prairie, TX. Recent credits include *Woe Is Me*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *The Book of Will*, *Julius Caesar*, and *The Bluest Eye*. This show has been such a thrilling and amazing experience. He would first like to thank his director, Jerome Stevenson, for pushing him to be the best he can be and for making this show so special. He would also love to thank his wonderful cast, family, and friends for always supporting him. God Bless.

GRAYSON FONTANA-HARLESS (Masked Man) is a freshman BFA Acting major from Keller, TX. Recent credits include *Macbeth*, *Figments*, and *Table*. Grayson would like to thank his friends and family for all of their love and support.

AARON BATES he/him (Masked Man) is a senior BFA Acting major from Denton, TX. Recent credits include *Romeo and Juliet* with Oklahoma Shakespeare, *Love and Information*, *Small Mouth Sounds*, and *Sophistry*. He would like to thank his family and partner for always supporting his dreams and loving him into being. Find and follow the light.

PRODUCTION BIOS

ANNA LUCZYNSKI (Assistant Director) is a senior BA Theatre & Performance major, with minors in Directing and Costume Design, from NOVA. Recent credits include *It's About You* and *Photograph 51*. Anna would like to thank Jerome, Hal, and Rick, as well as her family & friends.

ELIANA PEREZ (Stage Manager) is a senior BFA Design and Production major with an emphasis in Stage Management. Recent credits include *Così fan tutte* with OK Opera and Music Theatre Company (Stage Manager), *Arcadia* with TheatreOCU (Stage Manager), and *Distant Thunder* with Lyric Theatre of Oklahoma (Assistant Stage Manager). She is delighted to have worked with such an incredible cast and production team. She would like to thank her friends, family, and mentors for all the love and support.

LILI FOREST (Assistant Stage Manager) is a sophomore Design and Production major (with a Stage Management emphasis) from Tulsa, OK. Recent credits include *Eurydice* and *Zombies of Penzance*.

LAURA KRUS (Assistant Stage Manager) is a senior Dance Management major with a minor in Stage Management from Houston, TX. Recent credits include The Ann Lacy School of American Dance and Entertainment's annual Student Choreography Show, *Don't Stop Us Now*. Laura would like to thank her family and friends for constantly surrounding her with love and support.

TAN NEENO (Associate Scenic/Digital Media Designer) is a senior BA Theatre and Performance major with Scenic and Costume Design minors from AK and CA. Recent credits include *Love and Information* and *On To Victory!*. They are so thankful to their wonderful mother, amazing director, delightful girlfriend, and the friends who have supported them all along.