



THE UNIVERSITY of
NEW ORLEANS
SCHOOL OF THE ARTS
THEATRE

A PLAY BY
DOMINIQUE MORISSEAU

BLOOD AT THE ROOT

DIRECTED BY R'MYNI WATSON

WED-SAT 7:30PM / SUN 2PM

PREVIEW WED & THURS NOV 8 & 9

SHOWING
NOV 10TH - 12TH
NOV 16TH - 18TH



EXPLICIT
CONTENT

ROBERT E. NIMS THEATRE | PERFORMING ARTS CENTER | L.I.N.O., CAMPLIS
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THEATRE UNO
presents

Blood at the Root

by **Dominique Morisseau**

Directed by R'Myni Watson

NOVEMBER 10-12 & NOVEMBER 15-18

University of New Orleans Performing Arts Center

Robert E. Nims Theater

Notice:

This play uses explicit language & depicts racial tension.

This performance runs for 90 minutes & there will be no intermission.

CAST

Raylynn **J'aiLa Price***

Toria **Emani White**

Asha **Torie "T" LaCaze**

Justin **Walter Dixson IV**

Colin **Sam Cooley**

De'Andre **Justin William Davis**

Principal Miller **Quivonne Carr**

The DA **Chad Roberts**

Ensemble Students **Bryant Berry**

Emma Cox

Seth Mouton

(*) indicates that this project is being completed in partial fulfillment for the MFA in Film & Theatre

PRODUCTION TEAM

DIRECTOR TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
R'Myni Watson* **Diane K. Baas**

STAGE MANAGER CONSTRUCTION COORDINATOR
Grace Caroline Curley **Kevin Griffith**

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER CHOREOGRAPHER
Malachi Smith **R'Myni Watson**

COSTUME DESIGNER STEP MASTER
Tiffani Sheriff **Walter Dixson IV**

SCENIC DESIGNER DANCE CAPTAINS
Jacob Bensimon **J'aiLa Price, Torie "T" LaCaze**

LIGHTING DESIGNER INTIMACY/CULTURAL SENSITIVITY ADVISOR
Diane K. Baas **R'Myni Watson**

SOUND DESIGNER/AUDIO ENGINEER POSTER AND COVER ART
Amara Skinner **Caroline Mendez**

LIGHTING OPERATOR BOX OFFICE TEAM
Carl Penton **SOTA Graduate Students**

SOUND OPERATOR MARKETING COORDINATOR
Sara Clawson **Caroline Mendez**

PROPS MANAGER SOCIAL MEDIA/MARKETING
Jacob Bensimon **J'aiLa Price, Walter Dixson IV**

PUBLICITY/SHOW PHOTOS
Torie "T" LaCaze, Olivia Mixon

SCENIC CONSTRUCTION CREW
**Nihal Abdulla, Bryant Berry, Quivonne Carr, Sara Clawson, Sam Cooley,
Alexandra Conway, Walter Dixson IV, Savion Drake, Chad Roberts**

COSTUME CREW
Isaiah Benetrix, Aaron Brewer, Kaylyn Jackson, Jaya Turner, Trinity Lewis



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NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR



R'Myni Watson (Director)

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly." ~ Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from Birmingham Jail"

Many will ask, "Why this play? Why now?" My answer is simple, "Why not?" As the script so eloquently puts it, "*It all got roots.*" This quote from Dr. King is beautiful for this show because it captures the idea that all things stem from another. Like a domino effect, our choices to follow or break rules for the better, create a series of actions and reactions. If injustice continues for one, it will continue for all. *Blood at the Root* is layered with so many social issues and how they all blend into one another. I believe this is because the root of the issues we all face, come from fear or even hatred for our differences. The characters talk about the future and question what they will leave behind. The notion that we do today affects tomorrow is prevalent in the story as well as our reality. What our ancestors did or went through 400 years ago still affects us today and to say that it doesn't, is not only ignorant but disrespectful to those that are currently enduring the residual pain from the past. So how do we move forward? What are we to leave behind? Well, we leave our art. We shape the world, one play at a time despite the oppression we face because as artists we have a duty to pass on the stories. This quote from Amiri Baraka sums it up perfectly.

"The artist's role is to raise the consciousness of the people. To make them understand life, the world, and themselves more completely. That is how I see it. Otherwise, I do not know why you do it."

Being an artist directly places you in a position that encompasses all aspects of being a leader in the movement for social change. We have been running the same race throughout history – passing the baton to those that come to take over the fight for justice. Our art grows with that same passion and continues to press on. *My art fights for me and my peeps!* It feeds our souls.

This art form, Black theatre, it allows us to release. To carry on our traditions. To shape the world around us. To dance and move our bodies. To sing and shout. To clap our hands and stomp our feet. To cry and praise. To make bold statements. To challenge authority. To educate each other. It is a necessary nutrient for the survival of our people.

Blood at the Root has done this and more for everyone who has been a part of this storytelling journey. I hope that it does the same for the audience. Our process and work on *Blood at the Root* has been transformative and life-altering. I feel that many of us involved have tapped into a new area of artistry and have grown in ways that are unimaginable. I pray that we will carry these newfound skills, feelings, and sense of activism along with us as we move on to other projects. To my cast, this is your show and your story, it always has been.

SPECIAL THANKS

LaKeshia Glover

Henry Griffin

Lauren Turner-Hines

Justin Maxwell

Andre Cailloux Center for Performing Arts & Cultural Justice

No Dream Deferred



J'aiLa Price (Raylynn)

J'aiLa Price is a third-year MFA candidate and Instructor of Record at the University of New Orleans. She is from Georgia and is a graduate of Reinhardt University holding a BFA in musical theatre. J'aiLa recently worked with The Nola Project playing Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Gifty in *School Girls; Or, The African Mean Girls Play*. Her other notable roles include Katherina (Kate) in Tulane's Shakespeare Festival production of *Taming of the Shrew*, and Lady Capulet in UNO's production of *Romeo and Juliet*.



Emani White (Torcia)

Emani White is native New Orleanian and is pursuing her MFA in theatre performance at UNO. Emani has an extensive background in tv and film. Some of her credits include: *NCIS: New Orleans*, *No One Will Save You*, *Leverage: Redemption*, *Mike Tyson: Limited Series*, *Street Fighter 6*, and many more. She is making her UNO Theatre debut in *Blood at the Root*. She enjoys riveting storytelling and bringing authentic characters to life. She feels so blessed for the opportunity to work with this talented cast and crew on such a relevant show.



Torie "T" LaCaze (Asha)

Torie "T" LaCaze is a senior film student at the University of New Orleans. Although she is primarily focused on her work behind the screen she has a deep love for performing. Some of her previous works include Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet*, Heather McNamara in *Heathers*, and Andrew Clark in *The Breakfast Club*. She is super excited to make her UNO debut in *Blood at the Root*.



Walter Dixon IV (Justin)

Walter Dixon IV is a native New Orleanian, and first-year MFA acting student at UNO. Having obtained his B.A. in Performance Art from Dillard University, he enjoys sharing the stage with other talented actors and performers. Some of his professional credits include *The Color Purple*, *Simply Irma*, *The Lion King*, *The Glove*, *24 Hour: Life of Pontius Pilate* and many more. Being a part of this incredible program has helped Walter increase his love for the arts and open up infinite possibilities for the future as he continues his graduate studies.



Sam Cooley (Colin)

Samuel "Sam" Cooley is a second-year Creative Writing MFA student at the University of New Orleans and an alumnus of Louisiana Tech University. While Sam's first love is writing, he has recently been exploring his newfound passion for theatre and acting. *Blood at the Root* will be his third performance at UNO. His other performances include *Picasso at the Lapin Agile* and *Dead Name*.



Justin William Davis (De'Andre)

Justin William Davis was born in New Orleans, but was raised in Greensburg, LA. He studied acting at Southeastern Louisiana University and then at the University of New Orleans where he received his M.F.A in Theatre Performance. He works in film and television and has been a part of numerous stage productions in New Orleans. Some of his credits include *Mother Road*, *Tecumseh!*, *Othello*, *The Emperor Jones*, *Summer & Smoke*, *Where The Suga Still Sweet*, and *Angola 3*.



Quivonne Carr (Principal Miller)

Quivonne Carr, is a 20-year-old, native of Ponchatoula, LA. She is a third-year theatre major at UNO. She will be making her performance debut with *Blood at the Root* and is excited to have this opportunity. As she continues her studies at UNO, Quivonne hopes to continue growing in her craft and furthering her skills in performance and other areas of theatre.



Chad Roberts (The DA)

Chad Roberts is making his UNO debut in *Blood at the Root*. His most recent work comes from his involvement with the Riverdale High School Theater Program. His notable roles include Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Ma Ubu in *Ubu Roi*, and The Fat Prince in *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*. Chad enjoys music and storytelling.



Bryant Berry (Ensemble Student)

Bryant Berry, is a 21-year-old New Orleans native. He is a second-year theatre major at UNO. He will be making his performance debut with *Blood at the Root* and is excited to have this opportunity. As he continues his studies at UNO, Bryant hopes to continue growing in his craft and furthering his skills in performance.



Emma Cox (Ensemble Student)

Emma Cox is a senior film student at UNO. She's been involved with the theater department since the spring of 2022 and has since acted in and worked behind the scenes on numerous other theater and film productions at the school, including *Marie Antoinette's Head*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Closer to Heaven*, and *Is God Is*. She's honored to be a part of this show and feels so blessed to be given the opportunity to work with this amazing cast and crew.



Seth Isril Mouton (Ensemble Student)

Seth Isril Mouton is a fourth-year undergraduate theatre major. His previous credits include *The Addam's Family Musical* at the Azienda Theater and Reinfield and (Chuck Hall) in UNO's production of *Is God Is*. *Blood at the Root* will be his second performance at UNO. After graduation, he plans to continue pursuing his career in acting with local companies and projects in the New Orleans area.

UNO & SOTA ADMINISTRATION

PRESIDENT **DR. KATHY JOHNSON**

PROVOST **DR. DARRELL KRUGER**

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PROFESSOR **DAVID W. HOOVER**

Directing & Acting Performance Faculty

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR **DIANE K. BAAS**

Lighting Design Faculty,
Resident Lighting Designer, Technical
Director, & Production Manager

PROFESSOR **KEVIN GRIFFITH**

Scenic Design Faculty, Resident Scenic
Designer, & Construction Coordinator

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NEXT AT THE NIMS

No Exit

by Jean-Paul Sartre
January 31-February 10, 2024
Directed by David W. Hoover
Robert E. Nims Lab Theater

She Stoops to Conquer

by Oliver Goldsmith
April 10-20, 2024
Directed by Madison Smith
Robert E. Nims Theater

Creative Writing Workshop Concert Readings (CWW):

Your Children Will Follow

by Grace Caroline Curley
Friday, December 1, 7:30pm
Robert E. Nims Lab Theater

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Bulbancha [boul BAHN cha]



This production was produced by Theatre UNO. We do this to acknowledge that we are on stolen land. There is no empty space. There is No. Empty. Space. Every space has histories, caretakers, tillers, cultivators, and protectors. Erasing these histories is violence. Disrespecting the people and their labors is violence, and to this day we collectively suffer from the embodied trauma of that ongoing violence. The land keeps the score. The water also keeps the score. Bulbancha is one of the many names for this place that is colonially known as New Orleans, and Bulbancha literally means “place of many names” or “land of many tongues”. Located next to the great Okwa-ta, Wide Water, Lake Pontchartrain and the Mississippi; it is the unceded ancestral land of the Choctaw, Chitimacha, and Houma peoples, customs, and traditions. There is no empty space. I say Ase’ to the caretakers, protectors and expert Houma, Choctaw, and Chitimacha peoples of Bulbancha. I say Ase’ to my African ancestors whose blood and labor has added to the cultural shaping of this place. We do this to acknowledge those before us, but we must move from acknowledgement to commitment. Think of your privilege. Think of your opportunities. Think of those before you and those who will come after. What does commitment look like for you? Ase’

~ Lauren Turner-Hines & R’Myni Watson