

MOJA ARTS FESTIVAL **2023**

CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA



Yankee Bajan

PLAYWRIGHT: LINDA PARRIS-BAILEY DIRECTOR: DAHLAK BRATHWAITE

Sept. 30 Oct. 1 Dock Street Theatre



YANKEE BAJAN

Dock Street Theatre
135 Church Street
Charleston, SC 29401

Fed up with the continuing violence and racism in America, Hugh and Keryl, a Black couple with two teenage children, decide that it is time to leave the country. Spurred on by the presidential election of 2016, they begin to make plans to move to Hugh's ancestral home, the island of Barbados. The family's search for a space where there is a Black majority, Black leadership and Black power has been ongoing, taking them to and thru Atlanta Georgia, where the dangers of the day become apparent to Xavian, their son, as he joins the protests in the "Black Lives Matter" Movement, after he is the victim of a racially motivated attack. Barbados will be their final move as each struggle with identity, place and purpose. Preparations for the move take much longer than anticipated, and the family find themselves making their move in the middle of a pandemic and with a pending second term of Donald J. Trump. Feeling the urgency of the moment, they wind up in quarantine on the island as they navigate the cultural, economic, educational and generational shifts that they encounter.

Will they be able to embrace the expatriate life? Will Xavian and his sister Maya successfully meet the challenges of their coming-of-age story as Bajans? Will their "Yankee" culture have a negative impact on friends and family. Will they fight, or fly to the next potential homeplace in England or Canada where once again they will be in the minority?

The family dreams of the Bajan past and the Barbadian future, each dreaming of their legacy and their future. Led by the lost souls of enslaved Africans, heroes of the slave revolts and flying fish, they confront their own PTSD (Post Traumatic Slave Disorder). They embrace their legacy and each one finds his/her way home. Through musical soundscapes, traditional music and contemporary song, we journey with them as they travel homeward.



Linda Parris-Bailey

Playwright

Linda Parris-Bailey creates story-based plays with music focusing on themes of transformation and empowerment. She is President and CEO of Parris-Bailey Arts, Inc., and former Executive/Artistic Director of The Carpetbag Theatre, Inc of Knoxville, TN. During her fifty-year career as a playwright, she has written and performed numerous works. Linda is a 2019 Creative Capital Awardee and recipient of a 2015 Doris Duke Artists Award in Theater. Her award-winning works include, *Speed Killed My Cousin* and *Between A Ballad and A Blues*, her ode to Appalachian renaissance man Howard “Louie Bluié” Armstrong. Her signature work *Dark Cowgirls* and *Prairie Queens* continues to be performed. Linda is a founding member of Alternate ROOTS and a Senior Advisor to the Women Playwrights International Conference. Her works have been published in Alternate ROOTS: Plays from the Southern Theater, Ensemble Works, and other anthologies of contemporary plays. She recently completed the new work *Flushing (Make Room for Someone Else)*, an adult puppet piece, in collaboration with Eric Bass and Ines Zeller-Bass of Sandglass Theater, directed by Kathie DeNobriga. The piece centers on generational transitions in leadership, race, and culture. This is the International Premier of her latest solo work, *Yankee Bajan*.



Dahlak Brathwaite

Director

Dahlak Brathwaite, is an award-winning dramatic auteur: playwright, composer, performer, director, and filmmaker. His work has been presented at The Smithsonian, Brooklyn Academy of Music, The Kennedy Center, Lincoln Center, REDCAT, MCA Chicago, Ars Nova, The Public Theater, The Apollo, SXSW, by Creative Time, and on HBO’s last two seasons of *Russell Simmons Presents Def Poetry*. Dahlak’s trilogy of works - *Spiritrials* (solo play), *Try/Step/Trip* (musical), *Adapting History* (documentary film) - take a personal look into the criminal justice system and the relationship between Black American music and Black American subjugation. Development of the work has been supported by CalArts, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Victory Gardens, and Montalvo Arts Center. Dahlak has received awards and support from NEFA, the Doris Duke Foundation, The U.S. State Department, NYU Tisch, and MAP Fund. He was a Creative Capital finalist and a United States Artist nominee. Most recently, Dahlak was invited by The Public Theatre’s Under the Radar Festival to join their 2023 Devised Writing Group. He is a graduate of NYU’s Graduate Musical Theatre Writing Program, where he was awarded the Dean’s Full-Tuition Fellowship, and served as the Assistant Director for the national tour of the Tony-winning revival of *Oklahoma*.

Cast in Order of Appearance



Ayesha Gibson-Gill

Del

Ayesha Gibson-Gill is a producer, arts manager, performer, writer & director for stage, audio, and screen, and an advocate for Barbadian and Caribbean literature. She is a former co-anchor (with the late Dennis Johnson) of the top rated *Cockadoodledoo Morning Show* on VOB92.9 FM Barbados; playwright and director of *The It So Happen Suite*, adapted from Barbadian Timothy Callendar's short stories; and a literary and historical consultant and script writer for heritage-based productions. Ayesha was Cultural Development Officer for Literary Arts at the National Cultural Foundation Barbados for 9 years; advocating for local writers, coordinating national literary competitions, business development and educational programmes, along with producing and artistically directing multimedia productions and events. She was instrumental in the development of the distinguished *Arts Etc NIFCA Winning Words Anthologies*. Ayesha is the co-founder of the literary media arts company **Story Shyft** which produced the audio book of the award-winning short story collection *In Time of Need* by Shakirah Bourne. She is co-producer of one son.



Drew Drake

Hugh, Denzel

Drew Drake is an Actor, Poet, Emcee and Educator from Huntsville, Alabama, but currently residing in NYC; focused on creating art that facilitates healthy dialogue for people of color. Drew was last seen performing on TV in Roles such as "Lamar Cordell" in *Law and Order Season 22* and stages such as Bonnarro Music Festival, Barclays Center and Brooklyn Academy of Music production *Word. Sound. Power*. Drew is currently the Poet-In- Residence and teaching artist with Urban Word NYC. Drew's also a Professor at New York University; teaching Voice and Speech at Tisch School of the Arts. Learn more at www.thedrewdrake.com



Andresia Moseley

Keryl

Andresia Moseley, is a classically trained, nationally recognized, award-winning actress and spoken word artist based in Florida.

Moseley was recently seen in the “sold out” productions of the Starz Center for the Performing Arts musical *Crowns* and Stageworks Theatre’s *The Color Purple* (2022). 2016-2019

Moseley toured nationally as the lead character in *Speed Killed*

My Cousin with The Carpetbag Theatre Inc. Her performance in Anna Deavere Smith’s

Twilight: Los Angeles 1992 portraying 27 characters was named “the best performance of 2020” by *Broadway World*. Her performance as Kendra in Stageworks Theatre production

of *American Son* was declared: “A masterclass performance by an actress...” *Broadway*

World (2021). Moseley was awarded “Best Regional Performance of the Year” *Broadway*

World (2020). She also received an honorable mention in *The Wall Street Journal* for her

performance as Ms. Muller in Jobsite Theatre’s *Doubt: A Parable* (2021). She is excited to be

joining the cast of *Yankee Bajan*.



Victor Musoni

Xavian

Victor Musoni is an actor, writer and dancer based in Chicago.

Select theater credits include *Toni Stone* (Goodman); *The Most*

Spectacularly Lamentable Trial of Miz Martha Washington

(Steppenwolf); *What to Send Up When it Goes Down* (Congo

Square); *Queen of the Night* (Victory Gardens); *Columbinus* (The

Yard, Steppenwolf); *America V2.1, are you ready to smash white*

things?, *No Child* (Definition Theatre Company); *La Havana Madrid* (The Den Theater); *PYG:*

Or the Misedumacation of Dorian Belle, *Blood at the Root* (Jackalope); *The Toilet, How We*

Got On (Haven Theatre). Television and film credits include *Me, We*; *The Tensile Strength of*

Air; *61st Street*; *WHOLE*; *Chicago Med* and *6x9*. Web series and music video credits include

Brujos; *Young Lost Love* and *Sinner*. Musoni is an ensemble member of Definition Theatre and is

represented by Paonessa Talent Agency.



Callie Holley

Maya

Callie Holley is a 2022 graduate of NYU Tisch School of the

Arts having received her BFA in Drama. Her favorite previous

performance credits include *Pippin* (Catherine), *Ain't Misbehavin'*

(Nell), *Hair* (Dionne), *Measure for Measure* (Lucio) and a staged

reading of *Pericles* (Marina) at Red Bull Theatre. Callie can also be

seen in the Netflix documentary film *Giving Voice*. She would like

to express gratitude to Dahlak and Linda for their trust and leadership throughout this process,

as well as the cast and production team for being a part of bringing this incredible story to

life. She gives glory to God and sends love to her mama. Social media: @callieholley



Rashida Brereton

Grandmother Lou

Rashida Brereton is a theatre practitioner, educator, and ed tech enthusiast. She has a BFA in Creative Arts (Honors), a Diploma in Education, and is currently pursuing a MEd. in Curriculum Development at the University of the West Indies Cave Hill Campus.

Rashida has performed in numerous plays and has produced and directed the Ursuline Convent School's 2015 and 2017 pantomime productions. She has produced an online Theatre Games and Musical talk back series for young aspiring performers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Rashida is a member of the Barbados Association of Drama educators, on the board of the Caribbean Secondary Schools' Drama Festival, and works as an after-school drama teacher and an English and Theatre Arts teacher.

Additionally, Rashida conducts professional development training in theatre, education and the use of educational technology tools. She has represented Barbados at Carifesta X, XI, XIII, and at Talawah 2010 held at UWI Mona, where she won the best supporting actress award.



Ishiaka McNiel

Cyril

Ishiaka McNiel has appeared in several, films, musical and theater productions. You may have seen him in the popular Barbadian Comedy production, *Laff -it-Off*, *A Caribbean Dream*, *Barrow Freedom Fighter*, *The It So Happened Suit*, *Tribute to Burgie*, *Stories Exchange (S.E.X)*, *Talk Tent 97* and *Wha Good for de Goose*, to name just a few, Ishiaka's ability to engage his audience and

command his audience's attention brings life to this Caribbean soul, he also, is a singer, song writer and performer of various types of music including Calypso, Reggae, Gospel and Spouge, the indigenous music of Barbados. Ishiaka is a trained Mediator, and the proud father of three beautiful children, he loves Caribbean History, Culture, Heritage and loves to Travel. Ishiaka lives by these words "Vision without action is a dream and Action without vision is a nightmare".



Charlene Morris

Giselle

Charlene's love for performing began at the Operation Triple Threat Theatre (Barbados). She further graduated from the American Musical and Dramatic Academy (NYC). Since then, Charlene has performed in Cabarets, Off-Broadway showcases, and Children's Theatre - where she loved working with the FunikiJam's Off-Broadway Theatre company!

During the COVID 19 pandemic, she performed in online projects with OTT (Barbados), and Arts for Immigrants' Community (AFI, NYC) - projects include the cover of 'Come Alive' from the musical *The Greatest Showman*, and two covers of 'Far From Home' from the musical *Fiddler on the Roof* and the famous song, 'True Colors' by Cyndi Lauper.

Bubbly Charlene is focused and determined to continue her journey as an actress/ singer. She hopes to inspire/uplift as a teacher/mentor, and motivate/encourage as a casting director. She believes that every artist should dare to let their light shine and most importantly dare to aspire!



Jabari Browne

Kai

Jabari Browne is a Barbadian born Musical Theatre enthusiast, singer, dancer, actor, writer, rapper, and poet. He completed his Associates Degree in Mass Communication at the Barbados Community College and received a Bachelor's in Fine Arts with First Class Honours from the University of The West Indies. He has one studio album titled *Lack of Preparation* and singles available

on YouTube. He comes from the famed Leacock Family in Barbados, including his aunt (the late Carolyn Leacock), sister (local soca singing sensation Nikita) and parents (formerly of the Ellerslie Folk Chorale). Jabari has been in many productions with Operation Triple Threat and the National Cultural Foundation (NCF) such as *Mirror Mirror Show me a Hero*, *Into the Woods* and *The Wiz*. Jabari also plays the Narrator in the popular *Handel's Caribbean Messiah* produced by Dr. Stefan Walcott. Jabari is a scriptwriter, filmmaker and has a love for directing and teaching. He is currently a voice and drama coach at Eleve Performing Arts Academy in Barbados under the mentorship of Tara-Jane Herbert.



Simon Alleyne

Bussa, Pop

Simon Alleyne debuted on stage in 1997 in the Stage One Theatre Production: *Talk Tent '97* directed by Amanda Cumberbatch.

Over the past 25 years Simon has appeared in numerous theatre production such as *Pamapalam* directed by Jeanette Layne Clark, *Pantomime* directed by Rob Leyshon, the *UWI National Heroes Plays* directed by Harclyde Walcott, *Laff it Off* directed by Cicely

Spencer-Cross, *Simone's Place* and *Tales Of an Obeah Man* directed by Russell Watson.

Simon has also appeared in a few local movies and tv series such as *Secrets*, *Keeping Up with the Joneses*, *Obsession*, *A Caribbean Dream* and *Heat*. He is the founder of Lighthouse Foundation and producer of the Cocktails&Comedy standup comedy show. He is a founding member of the comedic duo Rum&Koke.



Michelle Hinkson-Cox

Nanny Grigg

Michelle Hinkson-Cox has been involved in theatre for over 30 years. She is a playwright, poet, producer, director, entrepreneur and artist-researcher. As a writer, Michelle uses her craft primarily to archive Bajan heritage, voices and experiences. She has a BA in Theatre Arts from the University of the West Indies (St. Augustine), where she also began her career as a theatre educator.

Michelle also holds an MA in Applied Drama from the University of London and she is currently pursuing her MPhil in Cultural Studies at UWI (Cave Hill).

Michelle is presently the Coordinator for the Associate Degree in Theatre Arts at the Barbados Community College, and works closely with the Barbados Museum & Historical Society. She is the Artistic Director of Rhema Artistic Consultants & Theatre Services (Rhema ACTS), and functions as a theatre consultant on various national and international projects.



Rosie Gordon-Wallace

Producer

Rosie Gordon-Wallace is a recognized curator, arts advocate, community leader and pioneer in advancing contemporary Caribbean diaspora art. She founded the Diaspora Vibe Cultural Arts Incubator (DVCAI) to serve as a local and global laboratory dedicated to promoting, nurturing and cultivating the vision and diverse talents of emerging artists from the Caribbean Diaspora, artists of color and immigrant artists. Twenty-six years later, DVCAI is recognized as a global resource and one of the region's leading platforms dedicated to providing diaspora artists with a venue to explore and experiment with new forms and themes that challenge traditional definitions of the Caribbean and Latin American art. Her awards include the Knight Foundation Cultural Award, The African Heritage Cultural Arts Center Third Annual Calabash Amadlozi Visual Arts Award, International Businesswoman of the Year, One of South Florida's 50 Most Powerful Black Professionals to name a few. In 2021, she was recognized by the Perez Art Museum Miami's International Women's Committee as International Woman of the Year.



Izia Lindsay, M.F.A

Graphic Designer

Izia Lee Lindsay is a mixed media artist who explores with both digital and traditional media. His artwork addresses symbolism in Caribbean iconography that is rooted in tradition but interpreted with contemporary ideas. Lindsay uses bold, geometric shapes that juxtapose and intersperse to form his multilayered artistic pieces. The thematic whole is a cultural narrative reproducing the dualities of his turbulent, cosmopolitan, Caribbean life. His research examines material culture, indigenous societies and the ever-changing landscape of the Caribbean while his subject matter tackles issues of identity and class in a post-colonial society. Lindsay is currently a lecturer in Miami, Fla.



Dr. H. Stefan Walcott

Soundscape and Music Director

Stefan Walcott is a performer and a young academic with a focus on the popular music of the English-speaking Caribbean. Stefan has a PhD in Cultural Studies from the University of the West Indies Cave Hill and currently lectures part-time at the University of the West Indies. He also tutors at the Barbados Community College, where he teaches Caribbean Music, Music History and runs the Caribbean Music Ensemble. Stefan has self-published three books, 60 Caribbean Folk Songs, 20 Bajan folks and Caribbean Composer's Handbook, which is being used in the education system in Barbados. He also has the only blog on Caribbean Music, www.stefanwalcott.com, which discusses music and culture. Stefan also leads a unique musical ensemble called the 1688 Collective, which has a not-for-profit arm called 1688 Dingolay Inc., which focuses on group childhood music education. Stefan has also created Handel's Caribbean Messiah, an original re-working of Handel's Messiah for using Caribbean folk and popular culture as well as led Barbados' national delegation to Carifesta. Stefan is currently director of the University of the West Indies Big Band.



Russell Watson, M.F.A

Media and Set Designer

Russell Watson is an artist and educator working in theater and digital imaging. He studied Drama in Education and Theatre Arts at the Edna Manley College in Jamaica and Film, Video and New Media at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. He has been Curator of Art and Media at Chicago's historic Hot House Center for Performing Art and Youth Program Coordinator at New York's Studio Museum in Harlem. His feature film *A Hand Full of Dirt* won the 2011 ReelWorld Film Festival Audience Award and was nominated for the 2011 Pan African Film Festival's Best First Feature Director Award. He is currently a Lecturer in Film in the Faculty of Culture Creative and Performing Arts at UWI Cave Hill and runs RSTUDIO - a multimedia workshop (est 2010) that offers digital imaging services to a diverse client base including corporate entities, government agencies, theatre companies, fine artists and academics.



Darren W. McCroom, M.F.A

Lighting Designer

Mr. McCroom has been a lighting designer for more than forty years. Some of his regional design credits include: Apollo Theater. The Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Alliance Theatre, Indiana Repertory Theatre, Syracuse Stage, Lincoln Center, Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM), Ford's Theatre and The Utah Shakespeare Festival. International credits include works in: Rome, France, Teatro Unam, Mexico City, Mexico, and South Korea. He is the recipient of the following awards and nominations: Falstaff Award for *Throne of Blood* by Ping Chong, Theatre Design and Technology (TD&T) award, 14th Annual Beverly Hills/Hollywood NAACP Theatre Award Nominee. Mr. McCroom is an alumnus of The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and is an Associate Professor teaching Lighting Design and Stage Management at Western Washington University in Bellingham, WA



Rasheedah Muslim

Production Manager

Rasheedah Muslim has been with Parris-Bailey Arts since its inception. She is the Production Manager for the Yankee Bajan production and Executive Assistant to the CEO. Her professional background spans many years of arts administration and managerial experience in retail and education supervision and management roles. She is a CELTA Cambridge, RSA Certified ESL teacher and has taught for 20 plus years in Saudi Arabia. Rasheedah has been involved with music and theater arts since High School. She is a community activist and advocate for interfaith dialogue.

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More information: www.npnweb.org.

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