



William Massolia
Artistic Director

presents

MLIMA'S TALE

By Lynn Nottage
Directed Jerrell L. Henderson

Lighting Design
Jared Gooding

Sound Design
L.J. Luthringer

Costume Design
Caitlin McLeod

Properties Design
Rachel Lambert

Stage Manager
Sara Beaman

Scenic Design
Joy Ahn

Production Manager
Jonathan Mayo

FEATURING

Ben Chang, David Goodloe, Lewon Johns, Sarah Lo, Collin McShane,
Christopher Thomas Pow, Michael Turrentine

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The Griffin Theatre Company is a member of the League of Chicago Theatres, Western Arts Alliance, Association of Performing Arts Presenters, International Performing Arts for Youth and is partially supported by a grant the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency.

THE CAST *in order of appearance*

David Goodloe Mlima
 Lewon Johns Rahman, Githinji, Aziz Muhammad
 Michael Turrentine..... Geedi, Wamwara, Hassan Abdulla
 Collin McShane..... Andrew Graves, Captain Ramaaker
 Ben Chang..... Fu Guoxi, Hua Huynh, Master Yee, Li Jun
 Christopher Thomas Pow Caterer, First Mate, Thuy Fan, Mr. Cheung, Hong Feng
 Sarah Lo Alice, Angie, Custom Agent

Mlima's Tale is performed without intermission.

Time: Present

Place: The heart of Africa and around the world.

Based on the article "The Ivory Highway" by Damon Tabor

Originally developed and produced by

The Public Theater

(Oskar Eustis, Artistic Director; Patrick Willingham, Executive Director)

Additional Production and Artistic Team

Hara Kumaran..... Master Electrician

David Rosenberg..... David Rosenberg Public Relations

Understudies..... Zhanna Albertini, Mark Tacderas

ACTOR BIOGRAPHIES



BEN CHANG (Fu Guoxi, Hua Huynh, Master Yee, Li Jun) is pleased to collaborate with Griffin Theatre on this amazing project. Acting credits include Goodman Theatre, Sideshow Theatre, Porchlight Music, Signal

Ensemble, Adventure Stage, Lifeline, Cor Theatre, Red Tape, Theater Alliance of Washington, D.C., and North Carolina Shakespeare Festival. Ben has appeared on the television shows *Chicago Med* (NBC) and *Empire* (FOX). Ben has served as dramaturg for ShawChicago, Strawdog, and Sideshow Theatre. He has composed music for Lights Out Theatre and City Lit.



DAVID GOODLOE (Mlima) is excited to be working with Griffin Theatre, and again with Jerrell Henderson!! David is a Chicago native, who has been acting professionally since 2006. His theater credits include *IBYT* (Chicago

Danztheatre Ensemble), *Defiance* (Buffalo Theatre Ensemble), *Skin for Skin* (The Agency Collective Theater), *for my brothers... whenever i may find them* (Step Up Productions), *An Improv Play* (InFusion Theatre), *A Fool Such As I* (eta Creative Arts), *The Last Saint on Sugar Hill* (MPAACT Theatre), and *Between Legs & Open Ears* (Black Ensemble Theater). He has worked with various production companies such as August Jackson Agency, Draft/FCB, Twist, T2 Studios, Back Ally Films, Crossroads Films, One at Optimus,

Mothlight productions, Ferderici Video, and Elkhorn Entertainment. And his on-camera IMDB credits include *Proven Innocent* (20th Century Fox), *Chicago Med & Chicago PD* (Wolf Films/Universal Television), *D.I.N.K.'s* (Sole Productions), *Thanks Mom* (Breakwall Pictures LLC), *Perceptions & Morning After* (Acestroke Productions). For more information on his work, please go to www.davidgoodloe.com.



LEWON JOHNS (Rahman, Githinji, Aziz Muhammad) feels blessed to create art with his new found Griffin Theatre and *Mlima's Tale* family. His recent Chicago credits include *Chicago PD* season 7 on NBCUniversal and 'Ace of

Spades' in *Hoodoo Love* for Raven Theatre; and he can currently be seen as 'Sam & Mitch' in *How a Boy Falls* at Northlight Theatre. His most memory filled credits come from performing as 'Marius' in *Les Miserable* with Theatre Memphis and as 'Joseph Asagai' in *A Raisin in the Sun* with The Renaissance Project Theatre Company in Atlanta, GA. Lewon, studied Theatre at Mississippi State University and professionally trained at The Company Acting Studio. He is overjoyed to be represented by Paonessa Talent Agency.



SARAH LO (Alice, Angie, Custom Agent) is so excited to be working with Griffin Theatre for the first time! Credits include: *Happy Birthday Mars Rover* (The Passage Theatre), *M. Butterfly* (Court Theatre),

ACTOR BIOGRAPHIES CONT.

South Pacific (Drury Lane), the 41st e.t.c. revue *Fantastic Super Great Nation* (Second City), *Cambodian Rock Band* (u/s Victory Gardens), and *You For Me For You* (u/s Sideshow Theatre). TV/Film Credits: *Empire* (Fox), *Utopia*, *Philip K. Dick's Electric Dreams* (Amazon), *Chicago Med* (NBC), *Untitled Romantic Comedy* (Freeform), *Station Eleven* (HBO), and Jordan Peele's sequel to *Candyman*, coming June 2020! Sarah is a proud graduate of the School at Steppenwolf, Black Box Acting, and the University of Chicago. Enjoy the show.



COLLIN MCSHANE (Andrew Graves, Captain Ramaaker) is thrilled to be making his Griffin Theatre debut. He was last seen on a Raven stage in *Sundown, Yellow Moon*. Previous theatre credits

include *Five Women Wearing the Same Dress and Sex With Strangers* (Playhouse West); *All My Sons* (Underground Theatre); and *Love Letters* (Mackenzie Theatre). Television credits include *Chicago Fire*, *Battle Creek*, *Jimmy Kimmel Live!*, *Final Cut* and *Adam Ruins Everything*. Collin studied theatre at Purdue University and is represented by DDO Artists Agency.



CHRISTOPHER THOMAS POW (Caterer, First Mate, Thuy Fan, Mr. Cheung, Hong Feng) is very excited to make his Griffin Theatre debut! Previous credits include *Ted/Leng* in

Cambodian Rock Band at Victory Gardens Theatre, and Macduff u/s in *Macbeth* at Great River Shakespeare Festival. He also appeared as Hank Barry in Silk Road Rising's staged reading of *A Great Migration* by Preston Choi, and voiced Jeff Balasco in Evil Kitten Production's audio drama *The Continuing Adventures of John Blade: Super Spy* by Kyle Encinas. Christopher Thomas Pow is represented by Shirley Hamilton Talent Representation.



MICHAEL TURRENTINE (Geedi, Wamwara, Hassan Abdulla) is so excited to be working for the first time with Griffin Theatre! Originally from Oklahoma, he is very excited to be living and working in the Windy

City! Some of his past credits include *Sugar In Our Wounds* at First Floor Theater. *The Total Bent* at Haven Theatre. *Frankenstein* and *Pirandello's Henry IV* at Remy Bump. *Nine To Five* at Firebrand Theatre. *Picnic* at American Theater Company. *The Grapes of Wrath* at The Gift Theatre. *The Hairy Ape* at Oracle Productions. *La Cenerentola*, *Faust*, *Die Walkure*, and *Cendrillon* at The Lyric Opera of Chicago. He has also understudied at several theaters including Steppenwolf, Chicago Children's Theatre, and The Lyric Opera of Chicago. He would like to thank his family, especially his mother, for their undying love and support. Michael is represented by Gray Talent Group.

PRODUCTION TEAM

LYNN NOTTAGE (Playwright) is a playwright and a screenwriter. She is the first, and remains the only, woman to have won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama twice. Her plays have been produced widely in the United States and throughout the world. In the spring of 2017, her play *Sweat* (Pulitzer Prize, Obie Award, Susan Smith Blackburn Prize, Tony Nomination, Drama Desk Nomination) moved to Broadway after a sold-out run at The Public Theater. It premiered and was commissioned by the Oregon Shakespeare Festival American Revolutions History Cycle/Arena Stage. Inspired by her research on *Sweat*, Nottage developed *This is Reading*, a performance installation based on two years of interviews, at the Franklin Street, Reading Railroad Station in Reading, PA in July 2017. Other plays

include *Floyd's* (Guthrie Theater), *Mlima's Tale* (Public Theater), *By The Way, Meet Vera Stark* (Lilly Award, Drama Desk Nomination), *Ruined* (Pulitzer Prize, OBIE, Lucille Lortel, New York Drama Critics' Circle, Audelco, Drama Desk, and Outer Critics Circle Award); *Intimate Apparel* (American Theatre Critics and New York Drama Critics' Circle Awards for Best Play); *Fabulation, or The Re-Education of Undine* (OBIE Award); *Crumbs from the Table of Joy*; *Las Meninas*; *Mud, River, Stone*; *Por'knockers and POOF!* Nottage recently wrote the book for the world premiere musical adaptation of Sue Monk Kidd's novel *The Secret Life of Bees*, with music by Duncan Sheik and lyrics by Susan Birkenhead. It premiered at the Atlantic Theatre Company in May 2019, directed by Sam Gold. Upcoming work includes an opera adaptation of her

PRODUCTION TEAM CONT.

play *Intimate Apparel* composed by Ricky Ian Gordon, commissioned by The Met/Lincoln Center Theater. It will premiere at Lincoln Center in spring 2020. She is also currently writing the book to the upcoming musical *MJ*, featuring the music of Michael Jackson, premiering on Broadway in summer 2020. www.lynnnottage.net

JERRELL L. HENDERSON (Director) is a Director, Puppeteer, and an Assistant Professor of Performance Studies at Chicago State University. Recent directing credits include *Thurgood* with Walnut Street Theatre; Studio 3, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* Show with Chicago Children's Theatre, *The River* with BoHo Theatre, and *Untitled* with Inis Nua Theatre (Barrymore Award nomination for Outstanding Direction of a Play). Other credits include *Something Like A War: A New Musical* with 11th Hour Theatre and *Salt Pepper Ketchup* with Passage and InterAct Theatre. His shadow play adaptation, *3 American Myths: A Riff in Shadow & Light in 3 Rhythmic Movements* was a finalist for a 2019 Jim Henson Foundation Grant. As an assistant director, Jerrell has worked with The Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre, and Lookingglass Theatre. He has taught and directed at several institutions including Roosevelt University, Illinois State University, Northwestern University, The University of the Arts, and Actor's Training Center. He received a BA in Theatre Arts from The Pennsylvania State University, an MFA in Directing from Northwestern University, is a member of the Lincoln Center Directors Lab (2012), and is an Artistic Associate of Black Lives Black Words. <http://www.jerrell-henderson.com/>

JOY AHN (Scenic Design) is a scenic designer and artist in Chicago. Joy is a graduate of The Theatre School at DePaul University. Prior credits include: *Sugar in Our Wounds* and *I'm Gonna Pray For You So Hard* (First Floor Theater), *Death of Gaia Divine* (Greenhouse Theatre), *Native Son* and *Eurydice* (DePaul University).

CAITLIN McLEOD (Costume Design) is excited to be collaborating with the Griffin Theatre for the first time. Caitlin is a costume and scenic designer, puppet enthusiast, and traveler. Most recent other credits include: *Stick Fly* (Writers Theatre); *Bunny's Book Club*; *Whose Body?*; *The Man Who Was Thursday* (Lifeline); *The Very Hungry Caterpillar Show* (Chicago Children's Theatre); *The Silence of Harrow House*; *The Stranger and The Shadow* (Rough House); *The River* (Boho Theatre); *The Ballad of Romeo and Juliet* (American Myth Center, NC); *American Journalero* (Teatro Vista); *Seussical* (Drury Lane); and *The Great God Pan* (Chicago Fringe Opera). She also is a co-founder

of the Chicago based costume crafts business Craftiga. She earned her MFA at Northwestern University. CaitlinMcLeodDesign.com

JARED GOODING (Lighting Design) is excited to be designing with Griffin for the first time. His design credits include designs for Writers Theatre, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Victory Gardens Theater, Timeline Theater, Madison Children's Theater, UIC Theatre, Remy Bumpo Theater, Strawdog Theater, The Hypocrites, Definition Theatre, Windy City Playhouse, Sideshow Theatre, Jackalope Theatre, First Floor Theater, About Face Theatre, MPAACT, Pegasus Theatre, Next Theatre, Congo Square, Citadel Theatre, ETA, Fleetwood Jourdain Theatre, and serving as the Lighting Assistant for The Wiz Live on NBC along with Associate Designing for Lookingglass Theater's tour of Lookingglass Alice. He is a company member with MPACCT and an Ensemble Member with American Blues Theatre. You can find his work at goodingdesigns.com

L.J. LUTHRINGER (Sound Design) is so grateful to be working with Griffin Theatre Co! The winner of the 2012 KCACTF Outstanding Sound Design enjoys helping to realize original shows or Chicago premieres such as *Blue Over You* (Spot On), *The Awake* (First Floor Theater Company), *Alias Grace* (Rivendell Theatre), *ENGAGE!* (Stellar Productions), *The Tragedy of He-Manlet* (New Millennium), and *Best for Winter* (Idle Muse). When he is not working all around the city of Chicago, he is training the next generation of designers as the Sound Mentor and Designer for Niles West High School. His portfolio can be found on a broken hard drive buried in his closet out of frustration.

JACINDA RATCLIFFE (Movement Design) graduated from Northwestern University with a BA in Dance and Psychology. Upon graduating, she trained on scholarship at Lou Conte Dance Studio while dancing as an apprentice with Project Bound Dance in addition to working freelance as a dancer and choreographer throughout Chicago. Favorite roles include Lucifer in *Striding Lion Performance Group's* production of *The Great and Terrible Doctor Faustus*, and the title role in *Frankenstein AI: A Monster Made By Many* which premiered at Sundance Film Festival in 2018. She recently choreographed Birch House Immersive Theater's production of *The Ode At Pint's End*. She currently dances as an ensemble member with Lucky Plush Productions.

RACHEL LAMBERT (Properties Design) is a freelance designer and director in the Chicago area and is very excited to be working with Griffin Theatre for the first time. Previous Chicagoland

PRODUCTION TEAM CONT.

credits include work with The Goodman, The Second City, Northlight, Remy Bumppo, The Gift, First Folio, American Blues, Buffalo Theatre Ensemble, Eclipse Theatre, BoHo Theatre, and others. Regionally she has worked with Peninsula Players and the Texas Shakespeare Festival.

JONATHAN MAYO (Production Manager)

has worked a variety of roles both onstage and backstage for several companies around the country. Some of his favorite experiences have been performing with Timber Lake Playhouse as well as Nothing Without A Company, teaching at Goodman Theatre, and working production for Dogwood Dell as well as Red Bull Flugtag. He has an oral history project, *Cleaning Closets®*, touring his home state of Kentucky throughout 2020. He is also a proud company member with Jackalope Theatre.

SARA BEAMAN (Stage Manager)

is happy to be working with Griffin again after having previously stage managed Griffin productions of *Ghosts of War*, *Letters Home*, and *Frindle* both locally and on tour. She otherwise works as a freelance stage and production manager based here in Chicago. Sara is the Production Manager for Theater on the Lake: The Chicago Summer Theater Festival and is also the Production Stage Manager for Theater Unspeakable. For Theater Unspeakable she has stage managed regional and national tours of TU's original productions *Moon Shot*, *The American Revolution*, and *Superman 2050*. Sara is originally from North Dakota and has a B.A. in Theatre Direction and Management from the Johnny Carson School of Theatre & Film at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln.

BRIAN SPRAGUE (Technical Director)

is a Chicago based Freelance Theatre Artist. He received his Master of Fine Arts in Acting from Northern Illinois University and has studied/performed internationally at the Moscow Art Theatre and Adana State Theatre in Adana, Turkey. He is currently an Artistic Associate for Oak Park Festival Theatre company. Some past Technical Directing credits include: *Fun Harmless Warmachine* (The New Colony), *Warrior Class* (Comrades), *The Harvest* (Griffin Theatre Company), *Akeelah and the Bee* (Adventure Stage Chicago), *JB, Arms and the Man* (City Lit Theatre Company) *Invisible Hand*, *Birdland*, *Earthquakes in London* (Steepe Theatre), *You Can't Take it With You*, *Fair Maid of the West*, *Macbeth*, *African Company Presents Richard III* (Oak Park Festival Theatre), *Grace*, *The Goat: or Who is Sylvia* (Interrobang Theatre Project), *Happiest Place on Earth*, *Give It All Back*, *Truth and Reconciliation* and *HeLa* (Sideshow Theatre Company), *Twelfth Night*, *Much Ado About Nothing* (Notre Dame Shakespeare Festival).

CATHERINE MILLER (Casting Director)

(They/Them/Theirs) is very excited to work with Griffin Theatre for the first time. Select casting credits include: *Sugar in Our Wounds*, *Hooded*, *Mike Pence Sex Dream*, *I'm Gonna Pray for You So Hard*, *Two Mile Hollow*, *Dontrell*, *Who Kissed the Sea*, *Refrigerator* (First Floor Theatre); *P.Y.G.*, *In the Canyon*, *Dutch Masters*, *Life on Paper*, *Living Newspaper Festival 9 + 10* (Jackalope); *Hoodoo Love*, *Sundown Yellow Moon* (Raven Theatre), *In the Blood*, *We are Pussy Riot*, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, *Queen of Sock Pairing* (Red Tape), *Encounter 2020* (Collaboration) and *The Hilary Duff Project*. Catherine was named one of Newcity's 2020 + 2019 Players: The Fifty People Who Really Perform for Chicago and was previously on the Windy City Times' 30 Under 30 list. They have a BFA in Dramaturgy/Criticism from TTS at DePaul and are a company member/on staff at Jackalope Theatre and First Floor Theater.

RYONN GLOSTER (Assistant Director)

is a senior at Chicago State University. Her major is CMAT (Communications, Media Arts, and Theatre) where her concentration is in Theater. She is the Secretary of the Theatre Club and recently made her acting debut with CSU in the fall semester of 2019. She wrote a student film called *Whole* where she acted and directed in some scenes. It debuts in April of 2020. She will be traveling to Cuba during spring break with CSU to learn about the theatre and dance culture there. Outside of school she teaches girls ages 4 to 18 theatre and dance through an organization called Global Girls. She has put on productions and organized opportunities for her girls to perform in front of six members from the Chicago Hamilton Cast and Phylicia Rashad. She has traveled to Kenya, India and Grenada performing and teaching girls through Global Girls. She received honorable mention for a Chicago Dramatists Playwriting Competition and performed in the Looking Glass Theatre summer Intensive Program. She taught and prepped high school students for the 2018 August Wilson Monologue Competition. She will be performing at ETA in a production titled *My Vagina*. *My Voice*. in May of 2020.

AHMED AL-HASSAN (Assistant Director)

is a Chicago native and earned his B.A. in Communications, Media Arts, and Theatre from Chicago State University. He continues to develop and practice his craft as an aspiring playwright, director, and choreographer by working with his alma mater during the 10 Minute Play Festival. Ahmed recently wrote, directed, and choreographed *Mulatto* for the Peacebook Festival presented by Collaboration Theatre. Ahmed plans to continue to emerge on Chicago's theatre scene with his first full length production in 2021.

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