



**Interim
Executive
Director**
Luther Goins

Producer
◊Derrick Sanders

PRESENTS

Day of Absence

By Douglas Turner Ward

Director
*◊Anthony Irons

Stage Manager
*Deya Friedman

**Scenic and Property
Design**
Sydney Lynne Thomas

Lighting Design
Levi J. Wilkins

**Costume, Make-Up,
and Wig Design**
Rueben D. Echoles

Sound Design
Rick Sims

Public Relations
Beth Silverman
The Silverman Group, Inc

Cover Design
Doc Wheeler

*** Actors' Equity Association**
◊ Congo Square Theatre Ensemble Member
◊ Stage Directors and Choreographers Society (SDC)

Congo Square Theatre Company (Administrative Office)
1016 N. Dearborn St. Chicago, IL 60610
Office: 773 296-1108 | www.congosquaretheatre.org

CAST AND CHARACTER BREAKDOWN

Jordan Arredondo.....	John, Courier
Ronald L. Conner	Luke, Jackson
Meagan Dilworth.....	Mary, Supervisor, Announcer
Ann Joseph.....	1st Operator, Mayor
Bryant Hayes	2nd Operator, Businessman, Clan
Sonya Madrigal	3rd Operator, Club Woman, Mrs. Aide
Kelvin Roston, Jr.....	Clem, Industrialist, Rev. Pious

TIME AND LOCATION

Time: Now?

Location: An Unnamed Southern Town

PRODUCTION HISTORY

2000-2001

The Piano Lesson by August Wilson
Before it Hits Home by Cheryl L. West
The Island by Athol Fugard

2001-2002

Ali by Geoffrey C. Ewing and Graydon Royce
From The Mississippi Delta by Endesha Ida Mae Holland
Playboy of The West Indies by Mustapha Matura

2002-2003

A Soldier's Play by Charles Fuller
Wedding Band by Alice Childress
Daughters of the Mock by Judi Ann Mason

2003-2004

Spunk by George C. Wolfe
King of Coons by Michael Henry Brown
The House That Jack Built by Javon Johnson

2004-2005

Black Nativity By Langston Hughes
Layla's Dream by Ntozake Shange
Seven Guitars by August Wilson

2005-2006

Deep Azure by Chadwick Bozeman
Black Nativity by Langston Hughes
Stick Fly by Lydia Diamond

2006-2007

The African Company Presents Richard III
by Carlyle Brown
Black Nativity by Langston Hughes
Joe Turners Come and Gone by August Wilson

2007-2008

Elmina's Kitchen by Kwame Kei Armah
Black Nativity by Langston Hughes
Talented Tenth by Richard Wesley

2008-2009

Sanctified by Javon Johnson
Black Nativity by Langston Hughes
St James Infirmary by Brian Tucker

2009-2010

Legacy Festival
The Colored Museum by George C. Wolfe

2010-2011

The Nativity by McKinley Johnson
Festival on The Square
Brothers of The Dust by Darren Canady

PRODUCTION HISTORY CONT.

2011-2012

The Nativity by McKinley Johnson
Festival on the Square

2012-2013

Bulrusher by Eisa Davis
The Nativity by McKinley Johnson
Fall of Heaven by Walter Mosley

2013-2014

Jambalaya Series
King Hedley by August Wilson

2014-2015

Jambalaya Series
A Nativity Story by Alexis J. Rogers
Twisted Melodies by Kelvin Roston, Jr.

2015-2016

Jambalaya Series
What I Learned In Paris by Pearl Cleage
Small Oak Tree Runs Red by Lekeitha
Dalcoe

2016-2017

August Wilson New Play Initiative
(Staged Reading Series)
Nativity Tribute by Taron Patton
Hobo King by Javon Johnson

2017-2018

August Wilson New Play Initiative
(Staged Reading Series)
Nativity Tribute by Taron Patton
Jitney by August Wilson
Twisted Melodies by Kelvin Roston, Jr.
(at Centerstage Theatre, Baltimore,
MD)

2018-2019

August Wilson New Play Initiative
(Staged Reading Series)
Lady Day at the Emerson Bar and Grill by
Lanie Robertson
Nativity Tribute by Taron Patton
Single Black Female by Lisa B. Thompson
Twisted Melodies by Kelvin Roston, Jr.
(Three City Tour – Baltimore,
Washington, DC, and New York City)

2019-2020

August Wilson New Play Initiative
(Staged Reading Series)
Day of Absence by Douglas Turner Ward

CONGO SQUARE THEATRE ENSEMBLE MEMBERS

Tracey N. Bonner, M.F.A.

Aimee K. Bryant

Daniel Bryant

Ronald L. Conner

Aaron Todd Douglas

Allen Gilmore

Anthony Irons

Javon Johnson

Ann Joseph

Bakesta King

TaRon Patton

Ericka Ratcliff

Samuel Roberson, Jr.

Alexis J. Roston

Kelvin Roston, Jr.

Derrick Sanders

Monifa Sims

Will Sims II



Jordan Arredondo

Jordan Arredondo's previous Chicago credits include *Laura and the Sea* (Rivendell Theatre Ensemble), *Much Ado About*

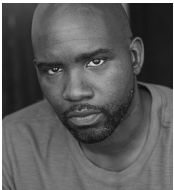
Nothing (Oak Park Festival Theatre), *First Love is the Revolution* (Steep Theatre Company), *Romeo and Juliet* (Teatro Vista), *Waiting For Godot* (Tympanic Theatre), and *The Party House* (The Runaways Lab Theater). Television and film credits include appearances on NBC's *Chicago Fire*, and independent films *Killing Eleanor*, *Binx*, and *Tantalization*. Arredondo graduated with his B.F.A in Acting from the University of Illinois at Chicago. Jordan is represented by Gray Talent Group.



Meagan Dilworth

Meagan Dilworth's Chicago credits include *The Ridiculous Darkness* (Sideshow Theatre), *31st Playwrights*

Festival (Pegasus Theatre), *Gift of the Magi* (Fleetwood Jourdain). Atlanta credits include *Father Comes Home from the Wars* (Actors Express), *You Can't Take It with You* (Marietta Players). Boston credits include *Saturday Night/Sunday Morning* (Lyric-Regional Stage), *O'Beautiful* (EmStage), and *Writing Home* (Stories without Roofs). Dilworth received her B.A. in Theatre and Performance Studies from Kennesaw State University and M.A. in Theatre Education from Emerson College.



***Ronald L. Conner**

Ronald L. Conner was last seen as *Booster* in Congo Square's production of *Jitney*. Other Congo Square

credits include *The Talented Tenth*, for which he won a Black Theatre Alliance "Best Actor in an Ensemble" Award; *Small Oak Tree Runs Red*; *King Hedley II*, *The Colored Museum*; *The African Company Presents...*; and *Deep Azure*. Other Chicago credits include *View from the Bridge* (Goodman Theatre), *Twelfth Night* (Chicago Shakespeare Theatre), *Seven Guitars* (Court Theatre), *Pipeline* (Victory Gardens Theatre) and *Paradise Blue* (Timeline Theatre). Conner has performed for regional theatres including St. Louis Black Repertory, Geva Theatre Center.



Bryant Hayes

Bryant Hayes' previous credits include *War! And other Comedies* (Theatre Wit), *Black Beauty Festival*

(Victory Gardens), *Bent* (Muse Theatre Collective), *Our Lives in Letters* (Chipola Center for the Arts), and *Antony and Cleopatra* (Oklahoma Shakespeare). Bryant holds an M.F.A. in Acting from Northern Illinois University and a B.F.A. in Acting from the University of Central Oklahoma.



***Ann Joseph**

Ann Joseph is a founding ensemble member of Congo Square Theatre Company where she appeared in

The Piano Lesson, *Playboy of The West Indies*, *Stick Fly*, *From the Mississippi*

Delta, the Jeff Award-winning Seven Guitars, and Elmina's Kitchen. Other credits include *I Never Sang for My Father*, *Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, *Wedding Band* and *Time of Your Life* (Steppenwolf), *Class Dismissed*, *Lost Boys of the Sudan*, *Wheatley*, *Living Green* (Victory Gardens), *Doubt* (Writers Theatre) and *A Christmas Carol* (Goodman Theatre). Joseph most recently appeared as Mame in *Radio Golf* at the Court Theatre. Regionally, Joseph has worked at American Players Theatre, Milwaukee Rep and Madison Repertory Theatre. Film and television credits include *Chicago Fire* and *Chicago Med* (NBC), *Early Edition* (CBS), *Hunter* (NBC) and more recently the web series *Becky's World*. Joseph is a lecturer in the Department of Fine and Performing Arts at Loyola University Chicago.



Sonya Madrigal

Sonya Madrigal's recent credits include *Romeo and Juliet* (Teatro Vista), *Oedipus Rex* (Court Theatre), *HOPE* part

II of a Mexican Trilogy (Teatro Vista), *The Adventures of Augie March* (Court Theatre), *Electricidad* (University of Illinois at Chicago). Madrigal recently graduated with her B.F.A. in acting from the University of Illinois at Chicago. She is a teaching artist with Steppenwolf Theatre, Lifeline Theater, and the August Wilson monologue competition. Sonya is represented by Lilly's Talent.



***oKelvin Roston, Jr.**

Kelvin Roston, Jr. is a Jeff Award winner, three-time Black Theater Alliance

Award winner and two-time Black Excellence Award winner. He is the winner of the Light in the Darkness Public Education Award from the National Association for Mental Illness for his play, *Twisted Melodies*, written and performed by himself. Roston's recent Congo Square credits include the title role in *St. James Infirmary*, *The Nativity*, *More Than a Miracle*, *Nativity Tribute Concert*, and *Twisted Melodies*. Roston's most recent Chicago credit was the title role in *Oedipus Rex* (Court Theatre), and he has performed at several theatres throughout Chicago and nearby suburbs including: Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre, Paramount Theatre, The Marriott Theatre, ETA Creative Arts Foundation, Writers Theater, Black Ensemble Theater, Timeline Theater, Northlight Theatre. Regional credits include St. Louis Black Rep, Fulton Theatre, New Theatre, Maine State Music Theatre, Baltimore Center Stage, Mosaic Theater Company of DC, and Apollo Theater in New York. International credits include: *Orb* (Tokyo, Japan) and *Festival Hall* (Osaka, Japan). Television credits include *Chicago Med* and *Chicago PD* (NBC), KFC and commercials for Instant Care and Ace Hardware. Film credits include *Get a Job*, *Princess Cyd*, and *Breathing Room*. He is represented by Paonessa Talent Agency.



***oAnthony Irons (Director)**

Anthony Irons is an actor, writer and director, who has lived and worked in Chicago since 2002.

He is an ensemble member of Congo Square Theatre Company where he directed *The Colored Museum*, *Hobo*

ARTISTS BIOGRAPHIES CONT.

King and the sketch comedy, *Tales from the Black Side*. He has performed in over a dozen Congo Square productions and has received Black Theatre Alliance Awards, African American Arts Alliance Awards and three Jeff nominations. Other performance credits include the Goodman Theatre, Court Theatre, Shattered Globe Theatre and Lookingglass Theatre, where he is also an ensemble member. Irons has performed and directed at The Second City. Directing credits there include *R.E.A.C.H: Risky Eclectic Artists Comedy Hour*, *Barack-O-lypse Now!*, *In Livid Color* and *I Know What You Did Last Election*.

Douglas Turner Ward (Playwright)

Douglas Turner Ward, playwright, actor, director, producer, dramaturg and visionary, was born in Burnside, Louisiana in 1930. He spent his early years on a Sugar Cane/Rice Plantation where both his mother and father worked as field hands. At age sixteen he went to Wilberforce University in Xenia, and although he was a journalism

major, he found time for theatre. In 1967 after the success of his plays *Happy Ending* and *Day of Absence*, Ward wrote an article for *The New York Times* entitled "American Theatre for Whites Only" in which he proposed the creation of a professional all-black theatre company dedicated to training black theatre practitioners and artists along with producing black plays. Ward and his colleagues Robert Hooks and Gerry Krone were approached by the Ford Foundation to make real such a dream and the Negro Ensemble Company (NEC) was founded with Ward as its artistic director. NEC's notable productions include *A Soldier's Play* and the Tony Award-winning *The River Niger*, which became the company's first production to go to Broadway. As a result of Ward and his colleagues' hard work, NEC went on to produce more than two hundred plays and became a place for black actors to gain experience and prominence in the theatre.

OUR MISSION

Congo Square Theatre Company is an ensemble dedicated to artistic excellence. By producing definitive and transformative theatre spawned from the African Diaspora, as well as other world cultures, Congo Square Theatre Company seeks to establish itself as an institution of multicultural theatre.

CONGO SQUARE THEATRE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Christopher Audain (Chair)
Constance Jones (Vice-Chair)
Sandra Hoyt (Treasurer)
Dawn Frances Reese (Secretary)

Chanel Coney
Alvin Goldfarb
Harry Lennix
Michael Pitts
Hugh Williams
Gertrude Wooten

ABOUT CONGO SQUARE THEATRE COMPANY

Congo Square Theatre Company (Congo Square) is an ensemble dedicated to artistic excellence. By producing definitive and transformative theatre spawned from the African Diaspora, as well as other world cultures, Congo Square seeks to establish itself as an institution of multicultural theatre. Congo Square is one of only two African American Actors' Equity theatre companies in Chicago. Founded in 1999, Congo Square aimed to provide a platform for black artists to perform and present classic and new work that exemplified the majesty, diversity and intersectionality of stories from the African Diaspora.

Congo Square has risen to become one of the most well-respected African American theatres in the nation. Previously mentored by two-time Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright August Wilson, Congo Square would go on to cultivate talents such as playwright Chadwick Boseman (Black Panther), who penned the 2006 Jeff nominated play *Deep Azure*, and playwright Lydia Diamond, who penned the massively successful *Stick Fly*, a critically acclaimed play that explores race, class, and familial friction. *Stick Fly* ultimately ran on Broadway and is currently being developed into a full-length series for HBO with Alicia Keys serving as a producer. Congo Square also produced the widely praised *Seven Guitars*, which would eventually go on to win top honors for best ensemble, best direction, and best production at the 2005 Joseph Jefferson Awards. This would earn the theatre company the distinction of being the first African American theatre company to receive such an honor.

DESIGN AND PRODUCTION TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

Rueben D. Echoles (Costume, Make-Up, and Wig Design) is pleased to be a part of this amazing project. He has been doing costume and wig design for over 15 years. His credits include *Call Me Madam* (Porchlight Revisits) *In the Blood* (Pulse Theater) *Hopera: Chronicles of a fallen Hero* 2009 (Hopera world) *You Cant Fake the Funk*, *Dynamite Diva's*, *Dionne Warwick*, *Patti Labelle* and *The Other Cinderella* (Black Ensemble Theater) *Lady Day*, *More Than a Miracle* (wig design only Congo Square). Mr. Echoles would like to thank his family for their continued support, his Angel's for being in the building, and Congo Square for this amazing opportunity.

***Deya Friedman (Production Stage Manager)** is excited to be working with Congo Square for the first time. Last year, Deya served as Stage Manager for *Miracle the Musical* at the Royal George Theatre. Earlier Chicago credits include productions at Goodman Theatre, Court Theatre, Northlight, Teatro Vista, the Broadway Playhouse, and the Marriott Theatre in Lincolnshire, where she also served as Production Manager for 3 seasons. Deya taught stage management classes at Loyola University Chicago, DePaul University, and was a part of the teaching faculty at the University of Tennessee Knoxville. Regional credits include productions at New York's Public Theater and twelve seasons at Peninsula Players in Door County, Wisconsin.

RICK SIMS (Sound Designer/

Composer) Rick is thrilled to return to Congo Square, where he has designed many successful productions. Chicago credits: Steppenwolf, Goodman, Court Theatre, Writers Theatre and Victory Gardens, Congo Square, (plus countless others). Regional credits: the Getty in LA; South Coast Repertory, Arena Stage and Washington, D.C.; Alliance Theatre Atlanta (Moby Dick), McCarter Theatre Princeton, Boston Playwrights, Arden Theatre Philadelphia, Playwrights Horizons in NYC, Actors Theatre Louisville. Rick has won Jeff Awards for sound design for Moby Dick and Frankenstein at Lookingglass Theatre. Rick is a member of Lookingglass Theatre in Chicago.

Sydney Lynne Thomas (Scenic and Property Designer)

is excited to make her Scenic Design and Property Design debut with Congo Square. She is a Chicago-based scenic designer and artist from Dallas, TX. Other scenic design credits include: Titus Andronicus (Haven Theatre), Sheepdog (Shattered Globe Theatre), Hoodoo Love (Raven Theatre), His Shadow (16th St Theater), and work on The Watson's Go to Birmingham 1963 (Chicago Children's Theatre). Sydney is a recent graduate of Northwestern University, studying scenic design and theatre. ~To those who got me here, thank you. Sydneylynnedesign.com / ig: @sydneylynnedesign

Levi J. Wilkins (Lighting Designer)

Chicago southwest side based Lighting Designer, Levi J. Wilkins has been a member of the Chicago Theater community since the age of 6. After high school, Levi attended Lincoln

College in Lincoln, Illinois. Since college, Levi has had the privilege of being the resident lighting designer for multiple churches in Chicago. Currently Levi is residing at The Faith Community of St. Sabina. Recently, Levi became the Resident lighting designer for the new AFC Multi Cultural Theater on Chicago's Southside. In addition, Levi is the go-to for many of Chicago's gospel music artist for stage lighting and stage design. His past theater credits include The Book of Mermon with Flying Elephant Productions, Not for Sale and Back in the day with Urban Theater Company, The Real Life Adventures Of Jimmy De Las Rosas and Good Grief with Free Street theater, The Encounter Festival (2018, 2019, 2020) and Peacebook Festival (2018, 2019) with Collaboration Social Justice Theater, along with many concerts and dance performance design credits. For more information on Levi visit fresherlight.com.

Razor Wintercastle (Production Manager)

Razor has worked in the Chicago area for quite some time. She has also worked in Africa, Asia, Australia, Canada, Europe, and South America with various theatre and dance companies, concerts, film projects, festivals, Trade Shows, Expo's, Cruises, etc. Some Chicago area companies include, Writers Theatre, Congo Square Theatre, Deeply Rooted, Muntu, Shattered Globe, MPAACT, GLP. INC, About Face, The Black Ensemble, Teatro Vista, American Blues Theatre, MPAACT Theatre, West Side Theater Guild, The Logan Center, Green Line Performing Arts Center, and more. When not working on productions Razor mentors youth to get more involved working backstage. It is a pleasure to return to Congo Square.

Luther Goins (Interim Executive Director) In 1990, after working extensively in Cincinnati, Ohio as a producer, director, and acting instructor, Luther re-located to Chicago. Between 1990 and 1995, he worked as the Assistant to the Producer at the Skokie-based Northlight Theatre and held the position of Resident Artistic Director at the African-American based Fleetwood-Jourdain Theatre in Evanston, IL. In 1995, he accepted the Managing Director position at the Chicago Theatre Company, a professional African-American company located on Chicago's south side. In 2002, Luther accepted a Business Representative position with the Chicago office of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States. *Love Child*, his first play, made its debut in January 2001 at Chicago's Live Bait Theatre. This highly successful production received numerous awards, including a Joseph Jefferson Award for "Best New Work"; and Chicago After Dark Awards "Best New Work" and "Best Ensemble". *Love Child*, in 2002, celebrated two other productions. One at the Chicago Theatre Company and the other at the Ensemble Theater of Cincinnati. These two productions also garnered awards including the Chicago African-American Arts Alliance Award for "Best New Play"; and the Cincinnati Entertainment Award for "Best Local Premiere." In 2016, after 15-years, Luther retired from Actors' Equity. Aside from working as the Interim Executive Director for Congo Square Theatre Company, he continues to work with many Chicago theatres as an independent theatre consultant.

◊ **Derrick Sanders (Producer)**

Derrick Sanders is the Co/Founder and Founding Artistic Director of Congo Square Theatre Company and has had the pleasure of performing and directing across the globe. He is an award-winning director and filmmaker that has recently directed the World Premier of *Penny Candy* at Dallas Theatre Center and *Twisted Melodies* at Baltimore Center Stage, Apollo Theater (NYC) and Mosaic Theatre. Along with The Island and African Company present *Richard III* at American Players Theatre. He has also directed the Washington, D.C. and West Coast premiers of Will Power's *Fetch/Clay Make/Man* at Round House Theatre and Marin Theatre Company. He also directed August Wilson's *Fences* at Marin Theatre; *The Mountaintop* at Virginia Stage Company, Clybourne Park and the world premiere of *Beneath's Place* in repertory for "The Raisin Cycle," at Baltimore Center Stage. His other credits include August Wilson's *King Hedley II* at Signature Theatre and for "August Wilson's 20th Century" at the Kennedy Center, August Wilson's *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* at Baltimore Center Stage, August Wilson's *Fences* and *Radio Golf* at Virginia Stage, August Wilson's *Jitney* and *Stick Fly* at True Colors Theatre in Atlanta; *Sanctified* at Lincoln Theater; *Gee's Bend* at Cincinnati Playhouse; *Top dog/Underdog* at American Theatre Company in Chicago; the world premiere of *Mr. Chickee's Funny Money*, *Bud not Buddy* and *Jackie and Me* at Chicago Children's Theatre; and the world premiere of *Five Fingers of Funk* at Minneapolis Children's Theatre. Sanders was the assistant director of August Wilson's world premiere productions of *Radio Golf* and *Gem of the Ocean*. As the Founding artistic director of Congo Square Theatre. He has directed numerous productions

CONGO SQUARE THEATRE STAFF BIOGRAPHIES CONT.

and has received numerous awards and accolades for his work. He was named the Chicago Tribune's Theatre Chicagoan of the Year in 2005. Mr. Sanders short film Perfect Day, which he wrote and directed has been screened in more than 20 film festivals around the world and has garnered critical acclaim and

numerous awards. He is an associate professor in the theatre department at the University of Illinois at Chicago and the Founder of Chicago's August Wilson Monologue Competition He received his BFA from Howard University and MFA from the University of Pittsburgh.

PRODUCER'S NOTE

Congo Square has been inspired by many ensemble based theater companies; none more significant to us than the historic Negro Ensemble Company (NEC). Our desire to produce Day of Absence comes from both the need to honor the NEC's legacy and impact on our theatre company, but also to examine the contemporary evolution this biting satire has had on American theatre and contemporary world culture. Today, social media outlets are filled with ideas and actions of "Cancel Culture"; Cancel Culture is a movement, in which "the people" withdraw their support from an individual, organization and/or corporation in order to bring light and demand action to injustices in society. This type of protest can be an extremely effective tool in the search of equity and equality. But in Day of Absence, Douglas Turner Ward explores this idea of "Cancel" and takes it a step further to "Withdraw" from society, which explores the question: What is America without People of Color? It is with great joy, for our inaugural production of our 20th Anniversary Celebration, we present to you Day of Absence.

Day of Absence-

The back drop of this 1965 extreme comedy is a country in socio-political upheaval. Race riots rip through Watts; the Vietnam war lumbers on, despite rising casualties and protests; Malcolm X is murdered; new civil and voting rights acts are met with racist Jim Crow laws; Suge Knight is born. The times certainly feel...uncertain. Blacks are threatened. Blacks are worried. Blacks, and allies to their cause, are also determined to hew out their place in these turbulent times. It is not enough to sit, uncomfortably, on the sidelines while destiny is being wrestled away. This is the furnace out of which Douglas Turner Ward writes *Day of Absence*. This gloriously stinging satire was an unapologetic punch to the stomach, to the head and to the heart of America's notions about race relations between blacks and whites.

Why do this play now? The Congo Square Theatre Ensemble was formed in the vein of the illustrious Negro Ensemble Company, a pioneering group of artists who strove to provide an outlet for black craftsmen and women for the stage. Congo Square Theatre is now at the precipice of 20 years of producing works from the African-American diaspora. What better way to celebrate this milestone than with the play that put the Negro Ensemble Company on the map? Thematically, compare the headlines. Dylan aptly told us: "The times they are a changin'". But 51 years later, Grand Puba reminded us, "The More Things change ..." you know the rest. Interventionism of foreign nations? Check. Marches and protests? Check. Threats to civil liberties? Voter suppression? Check and Check. And let's not forget recent chants of "Send her/ him/ them back to where they came from!" and "You don't belong here." This being an election year; the urgency of the times seems to demand vociferous participation. Once again, it is not enough to sit on the sidelines.

That's the national stuff. On a personal level, so many social contracts, as we once knew them, are being renegotiated. Gender, cultural and political persuasions are being redefined and challenged day by day. So what happens when that neat little box that you've been comfortably nestled in or have always placed others in, suddenly shatters or is rendered antiquated? What do you do when the people you thought you knew stop behaving the way you expect them to? Or want them to? In *Day of Absence*, the Announcer plainly reminds one of its citizens, "But from your oft-expressed views, Mr. Clan, shouldn't you and your followers be delighted at the turn of events? After all, isn't one the main policies of your society to drive the Negroes away? Drive 'em back where they came from?"

I do love a good alternate reality play. A "Hmm...what would happen if..." story. *Day of Absence* takes the "What would happen if..." question and heightens the results to stratospheric absurdity. Yes, it's a "Be careful what you wish for" warning to some white folks. But it's also a "Power to the People!" message. It's a reminder to the laborers, the workers, the domestics, society's unseen and unheard - that great power lies within them, and when there is common, yet determined purpose, the unseen and unheard can harness that power to great effect.

SPECIAL THANKS

Erica Daniels

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Clintina Taylor

Diana Ward

The Ruth Page Center For The Arts

Victory Gardens Theater

Thank you to *The Second City* and Dionna Griffin-Irons, Director of Diversity Talent and Inclusion for partnering with Congo Square Theatre Company space for rehearsals.

Learn more about Second City Diversity Inclusion programs at www.secondcitydiversity.com including Break Out Comedy Festival happening June 2020 | @secondcityod

2019 - 2020 FOUNDATION GRANTS

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