

PLAY ON
• SHAKESPEARE

othello

BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
TRANSLATED BY
**MFONISO
UDOFIA**

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PLAY ON! **OTHELLO**

by **William Shakespeare**
Translated by **Mfoniso Udofia**
directed by **Christopher V. Edwards**

Adele Nadine Traub* — *Stage Manager*
Eunice Woods* — *Assistant Stage Manager*
Kristin Leahey — *Dramaturg*
Emma Foley — *Assistant Dramaturg*
Steve Vieira — *Production Manager*
Colin Fleming — *Sound Designer*
Abraham Joyner-Meyers — *Sound Engineer*
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Jules Talbot — *Graphic Designer*
McKayla Witt — *Assistant Director*
Julia Luisa Lee — *Production Assistant*
Abigayle Scobee — *Production Assistant*
Travis Doughty — *Production Assistant*

**Appearing through an Agreement between Actors' Shakespeare Project,
and Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and
Stage Managers in the United States.*



ABOUT *PLAY ON!*

The **Oregon Shakespeare Festival** commissioned 36 playwrights and paired them with dramaturgs to translate 39 plays attributed to Shakespeare into contemporary modern English between the fall of 2015 and December 31, 2018. Additionally, the program commissioned two exciting Shakespearean adaptations. By seeking out a diverse set of playwrights (more than half writers of color and more than half women), it hoped to bring fresh voices and perspectives to the rigorous work of translation. Each playwright was asked to put the same pressure and rigor on language as Shakespeare did on his, keeping in mind meter, rhythm, metaphor, image, rhyme, rhetoric and emotional content.

The hope was to have 39 unique side-by-side companion translations of Shakespeare's plays that were both performable and extremely useful reference texts for both classrooms and productions.

Since *Play on!* was announced in the fall of 2015 they have worked with more than 600 actors, directors, stage managers and producers on 45 readings, workshops, productions and demonstrations in 19 different cities collaborating with 24 different theaters and academic institutions all over the world. This is only the beginning of work that will surely continue well into the future.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Othello is a play that has been mired in controversy and debate in modern times due in part to the themes of racism and misogyny. It has also been controversial due to the theatrical convention of Othello being played by Caucasian actors in blackface. The legacy of these issues creates a huge challenge when looking at the play with our (hopefully evolved) contemporary sensibilities. Yet, the current state of the world sheds light on the fact that there are still segments of our society living and investing in racism and violence against women. *Othello* was written four hundred and fifteen years ago. The themes and plot of the play might well have been copied and pasted from recent headlines or as easily conjure #BlackLivesMatter, or the #MeToo movement. Though quite old, the play has a contemporary soul. As an artist I struggle with the relevance of many of Shakespeare's plays. I question the play, *Othello*. Is the play written some 400 years ago a testament to the genius of Shakespeare, or a sad comment on our inability to change our human nature as it applies to tolerance, anti-blackness and violence against women?

This virtual workshop of the play is a translation of the original text by Mfoniso Udofia and it sets the play directly in our laps. It requires that we look at the spectre of racism and violence against women. It makes us question the intentions and realities of the original play, and in essence helps us to question whether we have been giving Shakespeare a pass for the last four centuries. We also wanted to allow the actors in the workshop to explore the text and have real conversations about the implications of facing the language and violence of the play, and inevitably what it all means in our present moment.

Hopefully, this virtual workshop will create conversations, debate and dialogue as you ponder the relevance, effect and artistry of the original *Othello* and Mfoniso's elegant translation.

Thank you, and I hope you enjoy the reading.

Christopher V. Edwards

SYNOPSIS

Night in Venice. Venetian soldier **Iago** convinces the lovesick **Roderigo** that he remains loyal to him and that he hates **Othello**, the Moorish general of the Venetian army, who has secretly married **Desdemona**. Roderigo, who desires Desdemona for himself, will only keep his chances alive by disrupting the clandestine marriage with Iago's help. They rouse Desdemona's father, the senator **Brabantio**, and deliver the news that Desdemona has eloped with Othello. Enraged, Brabantio scours Venice with armed men and confronts Othello. Violence is narrowly averted by the news that the **Duke** expects Othello at a war council in progress, and the parties hasten to the council, where it is announced that Othello will embark for Cyprus immediately to beat back the Turkish enemy. Brabantio complains to the Duke that Othello has bewitched his daughter. Othello responds that he wooed Desdemona honestly, and won her love through sharing the story of his extraordinary past. Desdemona is brought to testify and affirms Othello's account. Brabantio is bitter but cannot contest the marriage, and it is decided that Desdemona will accompany Othello to Cyprus.

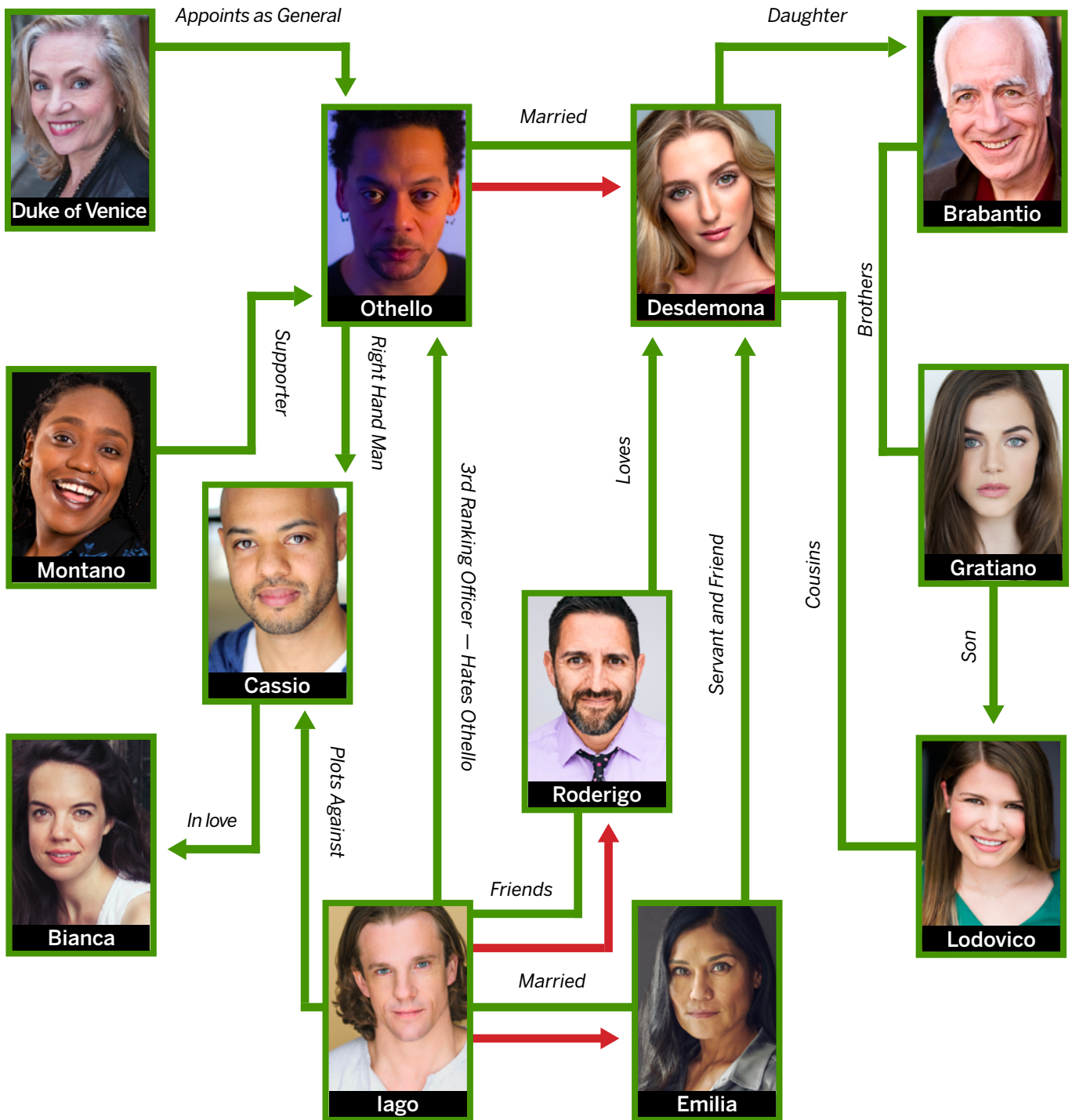
A great storm at sea destroys the Turkish fleet, but the Venetians arrive safely in Cyprus. First among them is **Michael Cassio**, lieutenant to Othello, who welcomes Iago and his wife **Emilia**, lady-in-waiting to Desdemona, and Desdemona herself. Cassio makes great show of courtesy with the ladies, under the watchful eye of Iago. Othello is last to arrive, and after the formal greetings, Iago is again left alone with Roderigo, and leads him to believe that Desdemona is in love with Cassio, who now presents a second barrier to Roderigo's desire. Together they hatch a plan for Roderigo to draw Cassio into a brawl that night and discredit him. After Roderigo exits, Iago vows to use the same fiction of Desdemona's infidelity to draw Othello into a deadly jealousy.

Night falls. Iago plies Cassio with drink beyond his tolerance, and sets Roderigo upon him to incite him to violence. A brawl ensues, and Cassio wounds Cypriot leader **Montano**, who attempts to break up the fight. Othello is roused from bed and in his displeasure strips the drunken Cassio of his lieutenancy. Left alone, Iago convinces the bereft Cassio that he should seek Desdemona's help in regaining the favor of Othello. Cassio accepts Iago's advice, and seeks out Desdemona the next day for her help, which she earnestly agrees to provide.

Iago arranges to have Othello witness the meeting of Cassio and Desdemona, and with feigned reluctance, reveals suspicions of Desdemona's infidelity with Cassio. Othello at first refuses to believe it, and threatens Iago with dire consequences if he cannot provide proof of his suspicions. Iago has Emilia steal Desdemona's prized handkerchief, which was a gift from Othello, and plants it in the hands of an unwitting Cassio. Othello sees Cassio with the handkerchief, and when Desdemona cannot produce it, Othello suspects adultery.

Iago's intricate plots, daring in their complexity, create a web of deadly and dangerous tensions. With Othello's consent, he plans the murder of Cassio at Roderigo's hand, and drives Othello into an obsessive jealousy, with tragic consequences.

CHARACTER MAP



 = Murder

CAST [IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER]

Lydia Barnett-Mulligan*	Bianca
Jenna Giordano	2nd Senator, 2nd Soldier, Lodovico
Joe Hernandez-Kolski*	Roderigo
Jesse Hinson*	Iago
Rachel Hoy	Sailor, 3rd Soldier, Clown, Gratiano
Emma Laird	1st Senator, 1st Soldier, Officer
Marya Lowry*	Duke, Herald
Celeste Oliva*	Emilia
Ryan Quinn*	Cassio
Katherine Schaber	Desdemona
Richard Snee*	Brabantio
Shanelle Chloe Villegas	Montano
Joe Wilson, Jr.*	Othello

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*Lydia Barnett-Mulligan**
(Bianca)



Jenna Giordano
(2nd Senator, 2nd
Soldier, Lodovico)



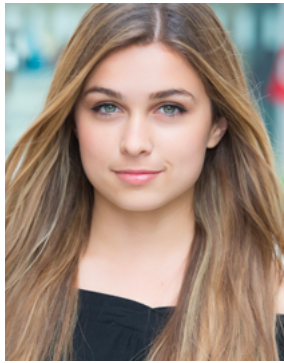
*Joe Hernandez-Kolski**
(Roderigo)



*Jesse Hinson**
(Iago)



Rachel Hoy
(Sailor, 3rd Soldier,
Clown, Gratiano)



Emma Laird
(1st Senator, 1st Soldier,
Officer)



*Marya Lowry**
(Duke, Herald)



*Celeste Oliva**
(Emilia)



*Ryan Quinn**
(Cassio)



Katherine Schaber
(Desdemona)



*Richard Snee**
(Brabantio)



Shanelle Chloe Villegas
(Montano)



*Joe Wilson, Jr.**
(Othello)

Lydia Barnett-Mulligan* (Bianca) Actors' Shakespeare Project: *King Lear*, *Pride and Prejudice*; *Much Ado About Nothing*; *The Tempest*; *The School for Scandal*; *The Cherry Orchard*; *The Merry Wives of Windsor*; *Macbeth*; *Measure for Measure*. Other regional credits include: *The Wolves* at Lyric Stage Company; *All's Well That Ends Well* at Tennessee Shakespeare Company; *Twelfth Night* and *Pericles* at Elm Shakespeare Company; *Elemeno Pea* at Boston Playwrights' Theatre; *Saving Kitty* at The Nora Theatre Company; *The Physicists* (w. Roger Rees) at Williamstown Theatre Festival; and plays at Gloucester Stage Company, Fresh Ink Theatre, Commonwealth Shakespeare Company, Greater Boston Stage Company, Stratford Center for the Arts, and Shakespeare & Company in Lenox, MA. Lydia is an honors graduate of Williams College. Film/TV: *CASTLE ROCK* (Hulu). She is a proud member of Actors' Equity Association. www.lydiabarnettmulligan.com

Jenna Giordano (2nd Senator, 2nd Soldier, Lodovico) is a current Junior BFA Acting Major at Boston University School of Theatre. Recent credits/awards include National YoungArts Foundation (2018 Theatre Winner), *The Pride*, *Bella Luna*, and *Jamal The Black Boy Werewolf*. Thanks to the cast and crew of *Othello* for making virtual theatre so gratifying, and much love to Chris Edwards for the opportunity for a regional theatre debut!

Joe Hernandez-Kolski* (Roderigo) Emmy Award-winner and two-time HBO Def Poet, Joe Hernandez-Kolski is an actor/poet/comedian based in Los Angeles. He is a graduate of the School at Steppenwolf and Princeton University. He is the proud host and co-founder of *Downbeat 720*, an open-mic for high school youth now in its 19th year. His recent project, "How I Spent My Summer Vacation," was commissioned as part of Center Theatre Group's Community Stories Series. You can watch it at pochojoe.com.

Jesse Hinson* (Iago) is a Boston-based actor and violence designer. He is a Resident Acting Company member with Actors' Shakespeare Project. ASP credits include *The Tempest*, *As You Like It*, *Pericles*, *Henry VI Part 2*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Twelfth Night*, and *The Comedy of Errors*. Jesse is an Associate Teaching Professor and the Undergraduate Coordinator in the Department of Theatre at Northeastern University.

Rachel Hoy (Gratiano/Clown/Sailor/Third Gentleman) is a current junior pursuing a BFA in Acting from Boston University. Recent credits include: #25 in *The Wolves* (Boston University School of Theatre) and *Lady of The Lake* in *Wanderlust* (Shadow of the Run). She is thrilled to be part of such an incredible project with a community of dedicated and talented artists.

Emma Laird (1st Senator, 1st Soldier, Officer) is a junior at Boston University, currently pursuing her BFA in Acting. Emma has performed in productions at BU such as *Marisol* and *honeyhole*. She thoroughly enjoyed working with Actors' Shakespeare Project for the first time.

Marya Lowry* (Duke, Herald) Actors' Shakespeare Project: founding member and resident actor (over 17 roles in 11 productions including, *Cordelia* & the

Fool, *King Lear*, Lyubov Ranevskaya, *The Cherry Orchard*; Brutus, *Julius Caesar*; Prospero, *The Tempest*; Olivia, *12th Night*, and the title role in *Macbeth*). Other theaters: Gloucester Stage Co. (*Lettice and Lovage*, *The New Electric Ballroom* –Elliot Norton Award, Best Ensemble–, *True West*); Gamm Theatre (*Escaped Alone*, *Hedda Gabler*); American Repertory Theatre; Vineyard Playhouse, Merrimack Rep, Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey (*Othello*), SpeakEasy Stage Company, Boston Playwrights' Theatre, Commonwealth Shakespeare Company (*Henry V*). Original theatre work includes Luminato Festival, Toronto, Canada and the International Arts Centre, in Malerargues, France. Marya's Voice and Lamentation workshops span France, Italy, Poland, Greece, Cyprus, the UK and the USA. Marya is a mentor to incarcerated women in Massachusetts and has served on the Brandeis U. theatre faculty since 1989.

Celeste Oliva* (Emilia) This is Celeste's debut with ASP. She is best known for her film and television work, most recently appearing in the Netflix original "I Care A Lot" and CBS' "Bull". Some of her favorite stage credits include, *Shear Madness* (off Broadway and Boston), *Grounded* at the Nora Theater, *Ch'inglish* at The Lyric Stage, and *It's a Wonderful Life* at Merrimack Repertory Theater. You can find her on social media @actingcelested.

Ryan Quinn* (Cassio) Off-Broadway: *The Crucible* (Bedlam); *Whorl Inside a Loop* (Second Stage); *The Killer*, *King Lear*, *Hamlet*, and *Antony and Cleopatra* (Theater for a New Audience); *Dead Dog Park* (59E59); and *Vanity Fair* (The Pearl). Select regional: *Bedlam's Sense and Sensibility* (American Repertory Theatre) & (Portland Center Stage), *The Crucible* (Central Square); *Yellowman* (Milwaukee Rep); *Hamlet* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (The Old Globe); *The King Stag* (Yale Rep); *Pride and Prejudice* (Dorset); and eight seasons with The Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival. TV/Film: *Bedlam: The Series*, *Blindspot*, *Madam Secretary*, *The Blacklist: Redemption*, *Person of Interest*, *Friends from College*, and *Ovum*. M.F.A: Yale School of Drama.

Katherine Schaber (Desdemona) is a Boston-based actress currently pursuing a BFA in Acting from Boston University School of Theatre (Class of 2022). Past productions and projects include *The Poets*, *burn this project*, *The Punk Dyke Play*, *Concord Floral* (Boston University); *Rigoletto* (Lyric Opera of Chicago); *1968: Revolution Remastered*, *I, Too Sing America*, *Leonard Bernstein Youth Concert* (Goodman Theatre Summer Intensives). Recent film projects include *Room 204* (short), *Dominoes* (feature).

Richard Snee* (Brabantio) Actors' Shakespeare Project: Founding Member, *As You Like it*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Macbeth*, *Richard III*, *The Winter's Tale*, *The Tempest*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Antony & Cleopatra*, and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. He was in American Repertory Theatre's *Othello* and Commonwealth Shakespeare Company's *Taming of the Shrew*. He has also performed at The Merrimack Repertory Theatre (*Something in the Air*; *Boy Gets Girl*; *Uncle Vanya*), The Huntington Theatre (*Present Laughter*; *The Sisters Rosensweig*). Recent work includes *Blithe Spirit* at Lyric Stage Company, *Hysteria* at The Nora Theatre, *Body Awareness* at Speakeasy Stage Company, and *Round and Round the Garden*, *Table Manners*, and *Living Together* at Gloucester Stage

Company. He was in GSC's production of *Auld Lang Syne* this summer. Film credits include *Gone, Baby, Gone*; *The Company Men*; and *Treading Water*. He has voiced characters for several animated television series including *Science Court*, *Hey, Monie!*, *Home Movies*, and *Dr. Katz*. He and his wife, Paula Plum, starred in the animated FX series, *The Dick and Paula Celebrity Special*. She was "Paula". He was "The Dick".

Shanelle Chloe Villegas (Montano) is a Boston-based actor, writer, deviser and teaching artist. Currently she is teaching with Company One Theatre Company in ESL classrooms. When she is not teaching, Shanelle can be seen performing all around Boston. Her recent work includes touring with New Repertory Theatre's Classic Repertory Company for both their fall and spring shows, Fresh Inks' *Last Catastrophist*, Yo Soy LOLAs' *Las Que Sueñan*, and Speakeasy Stage Company's *School Girls; Or, The African Mean Girls Play*. Shanelle was last seen on ASP stages in *Play On! Macbeth*, translated by Migdalia Cruz. She is currently writing an autobiographical one-woman show about intergenerational trauma in Black families. Shanelle graduated from the Boston Conservatory at Berklee as a member of the inaugural Contemporary Theatre program class.

Joe Wilson, Jr.* (Othello) has worked on Broadway (2000 Tony Award-nominated production of *Jesus Christ Superstar*, and 2018 Tony Award-nominated *Iceman Cometh* starring Denzel Washington), Off Broadway, and at regional theaters around the country. Joe has performed in a multitude of shows at Trinity Repertory Company, Providence, where he has been a (16th season), where he has been a Resident Acting Company member for 16 seasons. He is also the Coordinator of Activism through Performance, Founder of the Center for Activism and Performance, and Producer of "America Too," the annual community art-making collaboration at Trinity Repertory. Joe has a BA in Political Science from the University of Notre Dame and an MFA in Acting from the University of Minnesota/Guthrie Theatre. He is an Assistant Professor/Artist-in-Residence at Wheaton College, Norton, MA, and is an Adjunct Professor at Emerson College in Boston, MA.

Kristin Leahey (Dramaturg), Ph.D. (she/her/hers) served as the Director of New Works at Seattle Repertory Theatre and the Literary Manager at Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company. She has freelanced as an artist with the O'Neill Theater Center, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Play On Shakespeare!, Orlando Shakes, Trinity Repertory Theatre, Primary Stages, Classical Stage Company, Ireland's Galway Arts Festival, among other places. Leahey is an Assistant Professor at Boston University. She also is a Producer with the WP 2020-22 Lab and is a 2021 recipient of a Fulbright.

Christopher V. Edwards (Director) is the Artistic Director of Actors' Shakespeare Project. He is an actor, director, fight choreographer and educator as well as arts administrator. Prior to his tenure at ASP, Chris was the Artistic Director of Nevada Conservatory Theatre (NCT) in Las Vegas, NV, where he produced over 25 plays and directed 5 productions over 3 seasons. At Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival: Associate Artistic Director, Director of Education and Apprentice Training Program, and a 14-year company member. Directing;

Othello, Romeo and Juliet, The Three Musketeers, Around the World in 80 Days, Hamlet, A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Winter's Tale, among others. Chris co-founded Point of Entry Theater, producing classics and Hip-Hop Theatre adaptations of classics in collaboration with Lincoln Center's Meet the Artists Program. His acting credits span theatres across the US and abroad, from Cincinnati and Minneapolis, to New York, Scotland, London, and Norway. Chris received an M.F.A. from the U. of MN in Association with the Guthrie Theatre.

Adele Nadine Traub* (Stage Manager) Adele is a Founding Company member at the Actors' Shakespeare Project where she has Stage Managed approximately 25 full productions over the years. A New Jersey native, Adele graduated from Brandeis University and currently teaches stage management at Boston College, works as the Marketing Manager for J.P. Licks, and creates quilts for fun.

Eunice Woods* (Assistant Stage Manager) is a Chicago-based actor. She's had the pleasure of performing with numerous companies in the Windy City including Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Goodman Theatre, Writers Theatre, American Blues Theater, Steep Theatre and Manual Cinema. Other regional credits include: *Her Portmanteau* at American Conservatory Theater and *Pipeline* at Alabama Shakespeare Festival. Television credits include *Chicago P.D.* and *Shameless*.

Colin Lester Fleming (Sound Designer) is a Chicago-born, Grammy-nominated recording engineer, sound designer, record producer, and mixer. He is currently on staff at Q Division Studios in Somerville, MA. When not in the studio, he can be found perfecting his hand-pie recipe or doing the crossword in pen. Give him a follow @colindrumskinda.

Abraham Joyner-Meyers (Sound Engineer) is a rising senior at Harvard where he studies English lit and theater. As both Shakespeare nerd and fiddle player, he is fascinated by the way music appears as a narrative feature throughout the canon.

Sanjana Kumar (Editor) is a writer, director, editor and film student from New Delhi, India. She is a senior pursuing a Bachelor of Science undergraduate degree at Boston University for the past four years and has worked on several film, music video and theatrical projects in that time. Some of her work includes directing, producing and writing her very first independent short film called *The Name of Love*, writing and directing a BU thesis film called *Soul Mates* during the COVID-19 pandemic as well as most recently founding and running a start-up production company called Mous Films that is set to launch in late April/Early May. The company specialises in pushing forward Asian creators of color both in front of and behind the camera in order to improve representation in the western media. You can check out more of her work here: www.sanj कुमार.com. She was very thrilled to be working with so many talented people during the virtual production of *Othello* and wishes to get that opportunity again!

ASP Staff

Christopher V. Edwards, *Artistic Director*

Mara Sidmore, *Interim Managing Director; Director of Education Programs, Projects, and Partnerships*

Steve Vieira, *Production Manager*

Michael Forden Walker, *Director of Youth Programs*

Lindsay Williams, *Associate Director of Education Programs*

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Paige Clark*

Jade Guerra*

Brooke Hardman*

Jesse Hinson*

Jennie Israel*

Paula Langton*

Doug Lockwood*

Marya Lowry*

Johnnie McQuarley*

Nael Nacer*

Sarah Newhouse*

Maurice Emmanuel Parent*

Paula Plum*

Omar Robinson*

Mara Sidmore*

Alejandro Simoes*

Richard Snee*

Bobbie Steinbach*

Adele Nadine Traub*

Michael Forden Walker*

Robert Walsh*

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ASP Founding Artistic Director: Benjamin Evett

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DONOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to a list of funders far too long to efficiently list in a digital program. Please know that it is because of **YOU** as individuals, families, and foundations that we are surviving this pandemic. We are creating a special page dedicated to you on our website that will be published this spring to celebrate each individual who has given to ASP.

Thank you, from the bottom of our hearts.



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