





Photo by Felix Kunze

**THE MFA ACTING CLASS OF 2020**

(L to R): Nona Johnson | Deja Thompson | Troy Witherspoon | Abigail Coryell  
Austen Parros | Atiya Walcott | Lea Lanoue | Brent Grimes | Sherrick O’Quinn

**Your presence** at this performance is invaluable to us, and we trust you will enjoy watching our graduating MFA acting students in any and all of the plays that comprise this “rep” — *Father Comes Home from the Wars (Parts 1, 2 & 3)* by Suzan-Lori Parks, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* by William Shakespeare, and *Guarded*, a new play by Boni B. Alvarez. This multi-play repertory is the equivalent of the students’ Master’s thesis, and it culminates the ensemble performance aspect of the USC School of Dramatic Arts’ MFA actor training program. For more on the extraordinary challenges and rewards of the repertory experience, please read the words penned by the MFA Acting’s Founding Director Andy Robinson, which perfectly capture the essence of this remarkable experience.

**DAVID WARSHOFSKY**  
Director of MFA Acting

## The MFA Acting Repertory Experience

BY ANDY ROBINSON

This rep serves two purposes in actor training: one, it brings a group of student-actors together into a working ensemble; and two, it gives them an intense repertory experience that allows them to practically apply all aspects of their training. What the actor learns from being a working member of an ensemble is every bit as important as learning the nuts and bolts of the craft. To be a true ensemble player, one develops a vital connection and a responsibility to the other players. Individual talents are brought together into a coherent and responsive ensemble that creates the potential for extraordinary theatre.

Michael Chekhov, the great Russian actor, director and teacher, believed “the purpose of all training is to create character.” After more than two years of classes, workshops and performance situations, each one of these actors has now created three or more characters from three very different plays. And because they are a small group taking on this enormous challenge, they are sometimes playing roles that commercial theatres would be reluctant to hire them to play. Nothing stretches an actor more than to struggle with a character that’s 180 degrees removed from her or his “type.” It’s this kind of “miscasting” that often allows for revelatory performance.

Until relatively recently, actors coming out of drama school had more opportunity to secure an apprenticeship with one of a

number of resident repertory companies located throughout the country. The intensity of the rep experience (rehearsing one play during the day, playing another at night) allowed the apprentice to put recent drama school training to the test of practical application. Unfortunately, these resident rep companies have dwindled down to a precious few.

Today, the vast majority of students coming out of drama school are immediately thrown into a “freelance” situation where the work comes sporadically with a lot of “down time” in-between. The formative practical experience that professional rep companies used to provide has now, to a large extent, fallen to academy-styled university or private actor-training programs.

And if the repertory experience is not even offered in these programs, then chances are slim that the graduated actor will ever find it in the professional world.

Multi-play rep is not for the faint of heart. It requires stamina, patience and true belief in the creative imagination. Every bit of intellectual, emotional and physical resource the actor possesses is put into play. It’s an experience that strengthens and expands presence, the actor’s most valuable asset, and I am deeply grateful to the School of Dramatic Arts for keeping the experience alive here at USC.

**REPERTORY PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE**

***Father Comes Home from the Wars (Parts 1, 2 & 3)***

Fri, Feb 7 at 7:30 p.m.  
Sat, Feb 8 at 2:30 p.m.  
Fri, Feb 21 at 7:30 p.m.  
Sat, Feb 22 at 2:30 p.m.  
Wed, Feb 26 at 7:30 p.m.  
Thu, Feb 27 at 7:30 p.m.  
Wed, Mar 4 at 7:30 p.m.  
Thu, Mar 5 at 7:30 p.m.

***A Midsummer Night’s Dream***

Sat, Feb 8 at 8:00 p.m.  
Sun, Feb 9 at 2:30 p.m.  
Wed, Feb 19 at 7:30 p.m.  
Thu, Feb 20 at 7:30 p.m.  
Sat, Feb 29 at 8:00 p.m.  
Sun, Mar 1 at 2:30 p.m.  
Fri, Mar 6 at 7:30 p.m.  
Sat, Mar 7 at 2:30 p.m.

***Guarded***

Sat, Feb 15 at 8:00 p.m.  
Sun, Feb 16 at 2:30 p.m.  
Sat, Feb 22 at 8:00 p.m.  
Sun, Feb 23 at 2:30 p.m.  
Fri, Feb 28 at 7:30 p.m.  
Sat, Feb 29 at 2:30 p.m.  
Sat, Mar 7 at 8:00 p.m.  
Sun, Mar 8 at 2:30 p.m.

USC School of Dramatic Arts presents

## MFA Acting Year 3 Repertory

Scene Dock Theatre **February 7-March 8, 2020**

### THE COMPANY

**Abigail Coryell** | **Brent Grimes** | **Nona Johnson**  
**Lea Lanoue** | **Sherrick O'Quinn** | **Austen Parros**  
**Deja Thompson** | **Atiya Walcott** | **Troy Witherspoon**

### IN REPERTORY

## Father Comes Home From the Wars (Parts 1, 2 & 3)

By **Suzan-Lori Parks**

Scenic Design **Takeshi Kata** | Costume Design **Kathryn Poppen**  
Lighting Design **Josh Epstein** | Projection Design **Derek Christiansen**  
Sound Design **Alma Reyes-Thomas** | Stage Manager **Estey DeMerchant**  
Directed by **Gregg T. Daniel\*\***

## A Midsummer Night's Dream

By **William Shakespeare**

Adapted by **Andrei Belgrader, Natsuko Ohama and MFA Class of 2020**

Scenic Design **Takeshi Kata** | Costume Design **Kathryn Poppen**  
Lighting Design **Josh Epstein** | Projection Design **Derek Christiansen**  
Sound Design **Alma Reyes-Thomas** | Stage Manager **Estey DeMerchant**  
Directed by **Andrei Belgrader**

## Guarded

By **Boni B. Alvarez**

Scenic Design **Takeshi Kata** | Costume Design **Kathryn Poppen**  
Lighting Design **Josh Epstein** | Projection Design **Derek Christiansen**  
Sound Design **Alma Reyes-Thomas** | Stage Manager **Estey DeMerchant**  
Directed by **David Warshofsky**

*Father Comes Home From the Wars (Parts 1, 2 & 3)* is presented by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc., a Concord Theatricals Company.

*Father Comes Home From the Wars (Parts 1, 2 & 3)* was developed by *The Public Theater*; *Oskar Eustis*, Artistic Director; *Patrick Willingham*, Executive Director; and had its world premiere there on October 27, 2014.

The premiere was presented in association with *The American Repertory Theater at Harvard University*; *Diane Paulus*, Artistic Director; *Diane Borger*, Artistic Producer.

*Guarded* is presented by special arrangement with *Boni B. Alvarez*.

\*\* **SDC** The Director is a member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, a national theatrical labor union. This production uses the Artist Engagement Services of the University Resident Theatre Association.

# Father Comes Home from the Wars (Parts 1, 2 & 3)

### CAST OF CHARACTERS

(in order of appearance)

**The Musician**  
Abigail Coryell

**Leader Slave/Runaway Slave #2**  
Deja Thompson

**Slave #2/Smith/Runaway Slave #3**  
Austen Parros

**Slave #4/Odyssey Dog**  
Atiya Walcott

**Oldest Old Man/Runaway Slave #1**  
Sherrick O'Quinn

**Hero/Ulysses**  
Brent Grimes

**Penny**  
Nona Johnson

**Homer**  
Troy Witherspoon

**A Colonel**  
Lea Lanoue

Musician **Timothy T. Pyle**

Time:

PART 1 **1862** | PART 2 **1862** | PART 3 **1863**

Place:

PART 1 **West Texas** | PART 2 **A wooded area in the South** | PART 3 **West Texas**

There will be two 10-minute intermissions.

### PRODUCTION STAFF

Technical Director **Jordan Fox** | Hair & Make-up Design **Kathryn Poppen**  
Vocal Coach **Natsuko Ohama** | Asst. Director/Choreography **Kristina Hanna**  
Fight Choreography **Edgar Landa** | Fight Captain **Brent Grimes**  
Asst. Stage Managers **Alley McIntosh, Shelby Pine** | Asst. Scenic Design **Jesus Hurtado**  
Asst. Lighting Design **Yajayra Franco** | Asst. Projection Design **Ruby O'Brien**  
Crew **Olivia Dopp, Haley Graham, Alya-Joy Kanehailua, Nicole Royster, Nate Southcott, Dylan Smith, John Stephens, Anna Szaprio**

**WARNING** Please be advised that this production contains mature language and themes.

# A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

(in order of appearance)

### *Theseus/Oberon*

Troy Witherspoon

### *Hyppolyta/Titania*

Abigail Coryell

### *Bottom/Egeus*

Austen Parros

### *Hermia/Starveling/Cobweb*

Deja Thompson

### *Demetrius/Snout*

Brent Grimes

### *Lysander/Flute*

Sherrick O'Quinn

### *Helena/Snug/Moth*

Lea Lanoue

### *Fairy/Quince/Peasblossom*

Atiya Walcott

### *Puck/Mustard Seed/Philostrate*

Nona Johnson

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Place: **Athens**

There will be one 10-minute intermission.

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## PRODUCTION STAFF

Technical Director **Jordan Fox** | Hair & Make-up Design **Kathryn Poppen**  
Dramaturg/Vocal Coach **Natsuko Ohama** | Choreography **Deja Thompson**  
Fight Choreography **Edgar Landa** | Fight Captain **Nona Johnson**  
Asst. Stage Managers **Alley McIntosh, Shelby Pine**  
Asst. Scenic Design **Zoya Naqvi** | Asst. Lighting Design **Yajayra Franco**  
Asst. Projection Design **Ruby O'Brien** | Crew **Sebastian Borges, C.J. Craig,**  
**Zeke Goodman, Zoe Mehall, Cam Morris, Quinn O'Connor, Emily Ozrey,**  
**Zine Tseng, Katriana Velez, Sophie Warshauer, Anye Young**

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WARNING Please be advised that this production contains haze.

# GUARDED

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

(in order of appearance)

### *Malachi Shelton*

Austen Parros

### *Wayne Stanford*

Troy Witherspoon

### *Ina*

Lea Lanoue

### *Obah*

Brent Grimes

### *Ramona Randall*

Nona Johnson

### *Bebe Meyers*

Abigail Coryell

### *Chaetra Hendricks*

Deja Thompson

### *Jeremiah Parnell*

Sherrick O'Quinn

### *Aubrey Wright*

Atiya Walcott

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Time: **Now** Place: **Los Angeles**

There will be no intermission.

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## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

One of my missions as a director of theatre and head of an MFA Acting program is to bring new voices and new works into our curriculum. I am extremely excited and grateful to have been able to commission Boni B. Alvarez to write his new work for our MFA Acting Class of 2020 and premiere the play here at USC. It is somewhat mad to think one can workshop a brand-new play in the template of a three-play repertory, but that is exactly what we did and what we stand for. Never miss an opportunity to create regardless of the perceived constraints. More often than not, they wind up being only fear-based illusion. This has been exactly the type of collaboration between ensemble, playwright, director and acting school that I hoped it would be. I am proud and honored to share our work with you. We hope you like it and, perhaps even more so, we hope you can identify with these characters and this world. Certainly Hollywood, and more and more Los Angeles itself, can claim to be a "company town." One way or another, we all punch in.

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## PRODUCTION STAFF

Technical Director **Jordan Fox** | Hair & Make-up Design **Kathryn Poppen**  
Vocal Coach **Natsuko Ohama** | Fight Choreography **Edgar Landa**  
Asst. Director **Charlie Stern** | Asst. Stage Managers **Alley McIntosh, Shelby Pine**  
Asst. Scenic Design **Natalie Pesqueira** | Asst. Lighting Design **Yajayra Franco**  
Asst. Projection Design **Ruby O'Brien** | Crew **Hideyoshi Akai, Ryan Benson,**  
**James Billinsky, Mylah Eaton, Lindsey Esch, Roni Gayer, LeVonte Herbert,**  
**Wynton Jones, Tate McAluney**

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WARNING Please be advised that this production contains strobe use, mature language and themes.

## MFA Acting Year 3 Repertory

### FATHER COMES HOME FROM THE WARS (PARTS 1, 2 & 3)

**Gregg T. Daniel** directed the West Coast premiere of *Her Portmanteau* by Mfoniso Udofia at the Boston Court Theatre. Credits include *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry at A Noise Within, the West Coast premieres of *Tearrance Arvelle Chisholm's Br'er Cotton* for Lower Depth Theatre Ensemble, Lorraine Hansberry's *Les Blancs* for Rogue Machine Theatre (Ovation nominated, Best Director), and *Home* by Samm Art Williams for the International City Theatre. Daniel directed the L.A. premiere of *Honky* by Greg Kalleres (nominated-Best Director Comedy). For the Antaeus Theatre Company, he directed a revival of *Alice Childress' Wedding Band: A Love/Hate Story in Black and White* (Winner Stage Raw awards-Best Revival and Best Ensemble). He is a recipient of the 2016 NAACP Best Director award for the International City Theatre's production of *Fences* by August Wilson. Gregg is a Founding Member/Artistic Director of Lower Depth Theatre Ensemble (Lower-Depth.com).

### A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

**Andrei Belgrader** is a professor of theatre practice at USC. He is a theatre and television director who has also been a master teacher at the Yale School of Drama, a professor at UCSD and Head of the Directing Department at Juilliard. On television, he has directed numerous episodes of *Monk*, as well as *Law & Order: Criminal Intent* and the sitcom *Coach*. He directed extensively at major regional theatres such as the American Repertory Theatre, Yale Repertory, the Goodman and Seattle Repertory, as well as in New York City. Projects in New York include Beckett's *Endgame* at BAM, with John Turturro and Elaine Stritch, and *The Cherry Orchard* at CSC, with Dianne Wiest, John Turturro and Michael Urie. Both productions were named among the 10 best productions of the year in major publications such as *The New York Times* and *New York magazine*. *The Cherry Orchard* was awarded the Lucille Lortel Award for Best Revival in 2012. Among his former students are Frances McDormand, Angela Bassett, Tony Shalhoub, Liev Shrieber, John Turturro, Patricia Clarkson, Chris Noth, Ricardo Chavira, Michael Urie and Jessica Chastain.

### GUARDED

**David Warshofsky** finished spring semester 2019 in New York City as Weston in the Signature Theater's acclaimed revival of Sam Shepard's *Curse of the Starving Class*, directed by Terry Kinney. He just finished portraying Darryl Zanuck in the Netflix feature film *Blonde*. For the 2019 MFA repertory program, he directed Rachel Bonds' play *Swimmers* (2019), and collaborated with Tony Kushner on the original workshop production of Kushner's *A Bright Room Called Day* (2018), which premiered at the Public Theater this past fall, directed by Oskar Eustis. Among his many Sundance premieres are last year's Indie Episodic entry *It's Not About Jimmy Keene* (as producer as well as actor). On Broadway, he appeared in *Biloxi Blues, Carousel* (both Tony Award winners) and *On the Waterfront*. Other stage credits include *Henry V* at the New York Shakespeare Festival, *Blue Window* at Manhattan Theatre Club, *Romance Language* at Playwright's Horizons, and the national tours of *Biloxi Blues* and *South Pacific*. He originated the role of "Gottfried Swetts" in the world premiere of Tony Kushner's *A Bright Room Called Day*.

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Located in Los Angeles, a city synonymous with artistic innovation and excellence, the top-ranked **USC School of Dramatic Arts** is a leader in dramatic arts education. The School uniquely blends artistic training in a conservatory environment with world-class faculty artists and the full academic experience found only within a major research university. This close-knit, supportive environment offers students the freedom to explore their artistic passions. Through programs of the highest caliber, as well as initiatives that provide access to professional experience, students are prepared for leadership in every facet of dramatic arts. For more information, please visit [dramaticarts.usc.edu](http://dramaticarts.usc.edu).

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Devin Kelley  
Marguerite E. MacIntyre  
Alexander Macnicoll  
Adam Nee  
Dr. Willa Olsen  
Mary Reveles Pallares  
Madeline Puzo  
—*In Honor of  
Prakash Shirke*  
Rondi Reed  
Tim & Vicki Rutter  
Pranav Shah  
Rick & Jeanne  
Silverman  
Abe & Annika Somer  
Jeff & Cathie Thermond  
Ruth Tuomala &  
Ernest Cravalho  
John Villacorta  
Candice & Perrie Weiner  
Bradley Whitford  
Linda Yu

\*Represents multi-year pledge

For more information about giving to the School of Dramatic Arts,  
please contact Sara Fousekis at 213 821 4047 or [fousekis@usc.edu](mailto:fousekis@usc.edu).

# USC School of Dramatic Arts 2019/20 Season of Plays



## MFA ACTING YEAR 3 REPERTORY

Scene Dock Theatre  
Feb 7–Mar 8, 2020

### Father Comes Home From the Wars (Parts 1, 2 & 3)

By Suzan-Lori Parks  
Directed by Gregg T. Daniel

### A Midsummer Night's Dream

By William Shakespeare  
Directed by Andrei Belgrader

### Guarded

By Boni B. Alvarez  
Directed by David Warshofsky

### Othello

By William Shakespeare  
Directed by Kate Burton  
Bing Theatre | Feb 27–Mar 1

### Camino Real

By Tennessee Williams  
Directed by Edgar Landa  
McClintock Theatre | Mar 5–8

### Fuente Ovejuna: A Disloyal Adaptation

By Cusi Cram  
Directed by Rena Heinrich  
Scene Dock Theatre | Apr 2–5

### The Secret Garden

Book and Lyrics by Marsha  
Norman Music by Lucy Simon  
Based on the novel by  
Frances Hodgson Burnett  
Directed by Kelly Ward  
Bing Theatre | Apr 2–12

### Three Sisters

By Anton Chekhov  
A New Version by Sarah Ruhl  
Based on a literal translation  
by Elise Thoron  
With Natasha Paramonova and  
Kristin Johnsen-Neshati  
Directed by Nancy Cheryl Davis  
Scene Dock Theatre | Apr 23–26

## BFA SOPHOMORE SHOW

### The Winter's Tale

By William Shakespeare  
Directed by Kenneth Mitchell  
McClintock Theatre | April 23–26

## NEW WORKS FESTIVALS

### YEAR 1

#### New Play Readings

Presented in association with  
Playwrights' Arena | April

### YEAR 2

#### Playwrights Workshop

Presented in association with  
Latino Theater Company  
Massman Theatre | Apr 11–19

### YEAR 3

#### Play Project

Presented in association with  
the Pasadena Playhouse  
May 22 & 23

## TICKET PRICES

Plays: General \$15, Seniors \$10, USC Students/Faculty/Staff with ID \$8  
Musicals: General \$20, Seniors \$12, USC Students/Faculty/Staff with ID \$10

## PERFORMANCES

Thurs & Fri at 7:30 p.m., Sat at 2:30 & 8 p.m. and Sun at 2:30 p.m.  
(Except where noted)

For more information about our shows, visit  
[dramaticarts.usc.edu/on-stage](http://dramaticarts.usc.edu/on-stage)

