

USC School
of Dramatic Arts

TROUBLE IN MIND



STAGE DOOR



By Alice Childress | Directed by John DeMita
McClintock Theatre **October 31-November 3, 2019**

USC School of Dramatic Arts

presents

TROUBLE IN MIND

By **Alice Childress**

With

Kameron J. Brown **Giovanny Camarena**

Jordan Jahmal Davis **Mattie Harris Lowe**

Taylor McKenzie **Grace Sallee**

Justin Schulsohn **Cole Slater** **Maxwell Woehrmann**

Scenic Design

Qixing Tong

Costume Design

Terry Gordon

Lighting Design

Ivan Anguiano

Sound Design

Joy Cheever

Stage Manager

Jamie Salinger

Directed by **John DeMita**

McClintock Theatre **October 31-November 3, 2019**

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(in order of appearance)

Wiletta Mayer

Mattie Harris Lowe

Judy Sears

Grace Sallee

Henry

Justin Schulsohn

Al Manners

Cole Slater

John Nevins

Jordan Jahmal Davis

Eddie Fenton

Maxwell Woehrmann

Millie Davis

Taylor McKenzie

Bill O'Wray

Giovanny Camarena

Sheldon Forrester

Kameron J. Brown

Time: **Fall 1957**

Place: **A Broadway theater in New York City**

There will be one 10-minute intermission.

PRODUCTION STAFF

Technical Director **Jordan Fox** | Assistant Director **Abbey Harris**

Assistant Stage Manager **Sofia D'Annunzio** | 2nd Assistant Stage Manager **Jasmine Song**

Scenic Artist **Jess Peeters** | Crew **Madison Anderson, Hollis Brown,**

Soo Min Cho, Sydney Fabis, Kylie Foley, Danielle Graham,

Thomas Rudden, Eitan Senerman

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

In the mid-1950s, the United States was still racially segregated in many facets of society, especially in the South, where the so-called "Jim Crow" laws dictated that blacks were separated from whites in fundamental ways. There were separate drinking fountains, restaurants, hotels, churches, and seats on the bus. An African American attempting to cross racial lines and eat in a white restaurant could be prosecuted and sent to jail.

These laws were being challenged though. In 1955, in Montgomery, Alabama, Rosa Parks was fined for refusing to give up her seat to a white passenger. A bus boycott was organized, and by 1956, Alabama's segregation laws were ruled unconstitutional. The events in Montgomery led to bus boycotts in other cities in the South. The modern civil rights movement was born.

Written in 1955 (revised 1957), *Trouble in Mind* is about the shoddy treatment that African Americans and women receive both on and off the American stage, which becomes symbolic of society at large. It is a satirical drama about white writers, producers, and directors, who, because they are unfamiliar with black life and culture, uphold inaccurate portraits. Childress, an actor and an original member of the American Negro Theater company, codirected *Trouble in Mind*, her first full-length play, which earned her an Obie Award, the first ever won by a black woman.

DIRECTOR'S BIO

John DeMita is delighted to be directing again at USC's School of Dramatic Arts, where he is also an Associate Professor of Theatre Arts in Acting. Other directing credits include: At USC: Thornton School of Music: The opera *Postcard from Morocco* (MFA 2018), School of Dramatic Arts: *Rough Magic* (BA 2019), *Mr. Burns: A Post-Electric Play* (BA, 2017), *The Country Wife* (BA, 2016), *The Way of the World* (BA, 2015), *Dark of the Moon* (BFA, 2014), and *27 Wagons Full of Cotton and Other Plays* (MFA, 2012). Other Theatre Directing: Andak Theatre Company (North Hollywood): *The Elephant Man*, *Betrayal* (Garland Award), *The Misanthrope* (Backstage West Award), Santa Clarita Performing Arts Center: *SubUrbia*, *Equus*, *Death of a Salesman*, *As You Like It*, *Rumors*, El Camino Center for the Performing Arts: *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, *The Crucible*, *Picnic*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Macbeth*, *The Hot I Baltimore*, *Mother Courage and her Children*, and *Hay Fever*. John has also directed and performed in hundreds of animated features, cartoon and live action series, and video games, including English language dubs of Netflix shows from Georgia (formerly Soviet Socialist Republic), Brazil, the Netherlands, Spain, Finland, Germany, and Italy, working with local and international voice actors, as well as giving USC SDA students their first professional jobs.

SPECIAL THANKS

Kathy Dunn-Muzingo, Scott Faris, Kate Dunn, and Dr. Carmen Harris

Beyond the still-relevant issues of race and gender illuminated in the play, *Childress* examines the often-dysfunctional artistic relationship between actor and director. In a business where 90% unemployment is commonplace, most actors fearfully believe their gratitude should outweigh their freedom to express their opinions. They believe themselves to be instantly replaceable. This is at best nonsense, and at worst dangerous to both the artistic health of the actor, and to the quality of the actual production.

I quote Michelle Williams' compelling acceptance speech at this year's Emmy Awards:

"When you put value into a person, it empowers that person to get in touch with their own inherent value. And then where do they put that value? They put it into their work."

As a white male director, directing a cast of women and actors of color (among others) in a play about the troubles that can come out of this exact circumstance, I knew it went both ways, that I too might be considered replaceable. But even while holding me to the highest standard, this wonderful cast never treated me that way. Ours was a real collaboration, and I am both proud of the result and deeply grateful for the value they put into me.

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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.

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USC School of Dramatic Arts 2019/20 Season of Plays



Men on Boats

By Jaclyn Backhaus
Directed by Anita Dashiell-Sparks
McClintock Theatre | Oct 3–6

Amsterdam

By Maya Arad Yasar
Directed by Lilach Dekel-Avneri
Scene Dock Theatre | Oct 10–20

The Cider House Rules

PART ONE: **Here in St. Cloud's**

PART TWO: **In Other Parts of
the World**

Adapted by Peter Parnell
From the novel by John Irving
Conceived for the Stage by Tom
Hulce, Jane Jones and Peter Parnell
Directed by Scott Faris
Bing Theatre | Oct 31–Nov 10

Trouble in Mind

By Alice Childress
Directed by John DeMita
McClintock Theatre | Oct 31–Nov 3

MFA ACTING YEAR 2 REPERTORY at

at The Los Angeles Theatre Center
LATC Theatre 3 | Nov 7–16

The Brothers Size

By Tarell Alvin McCraney
Directed by Larry Powell

The Minotaur

By Anna Ziegler | Directed by
Jonathan Muñoz-Proulx

Mad Forest

By Caryl Churchill
Directed by Christopher Shaw
Scene Dock Theatre | Nov 14–24

Barbarians

Book by Maxim Gorky | Translated
by Kitty Hunter Blair, Jeremy
Brooks and Michael Weller
Directed by Susan Angelo
McClintock Theatre | Nov 21–24

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 Gregg T. Daniel
Scene Dock Theatre | Apr 23–26

BFA Sophomore Show

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

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

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(Except where noted)

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dramaticarts.usc.edu/on-stage



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