

# THE GODS ARE NOT TO BLAME



*The Gods Are Not To Blame*

By Ola Rotimi

Sanctuary Theatre | April 16-19, 2026

USC School of Dramatic Arts 25/26

USC School of Dramatic Arts presents

# THE GODS ARE NOT TO BLAME

By **Ola Rotimi**

Directed by **Bayo Akinfemi**

With

**Dara Adedara Edaoto Agbeniyi Ezekiel Akindele Kola Akingbade  
Al-amin Bada Agbeniyi Sekinat Bada Agbeniyi Jordan Dodd  
Kehara Edirisinghe Alexandria Gee Adeloluwa Ijidakinro  
Amaka Iruobe Angelo Marshall Sydney Matthews Trinity McMillan  
Tise Oduwole Newton Okewoye Esther Oluokun  
Amber 'Dottie' Renée Owens DePrē Owens Joshua Passmore  
Leilani Powell Alexxa Riley Elina Seravokaya Tony Tambi  
Djima Togbe Jomi Williams Biliena Zekarias**

Scenic & Projections Design

**Lukas Garberg** *He/Him*

*BFA Theatrical Design Senior*

Costume Design

**Paul Lazzari**

*BA Theatre Senior*

Lighting Design

**Sam LeRoy**

*BFA Theatrical Design Sophomore*

Sound Design

**Aerik Harbert**

Technical Director

**Duncan Mahoney**

Production Stage Manager

**Lexi Cruz** *She/Her*

*BFA Stage Management Senior*

**Sanctuary Theatre April 16-19, 2026**

This production features a unique partnership with SDA Professor Bayo Akinfemi's professional theatre company, African Theatre Artistes Society (ATARS), bringing professional actors to work alongside students.

Presented in association with ATARS.



**CAST** (In alphabetical order)



**Dara Adedara** *She/Her*  
**Second Chief**  
Guest Actor, BA Theatre '23



**Edaoto Agbeniyi**  
**Royal Bard, Akilapa**  
Guest Actor



**Ezekiel Akindele**  
**Labata, Baba Fakunle,**  
**Townsperson**  
Guest Actor



**Kola Akingbade**  
**King Adetusa, Old Man**  
Guest Actor



**Jordan Dodd** *He/Him*  
**Agidi**  
BFA Musical Theatre First-Year



**Kehara Edirisinghe** *She/Her*  
**Abero**  
BA Theatre, Emphasis  
in Acting Junior



**Alexandria Gee** *She/Her*  
**Fourth Citizen, Townsperson**  
Guest Actor, BA Theatre '24



**Adedoluwa Ijidakinro**  
**They/Them | Alaka, Townsperson**  
BA Theatre, Emphasis in  
Acting Senior



**Amaka Iruobe** *She/Her*  
**First Citizen, Townsperson,**  
**Bodyguard**  
Guest Actor



**Sydney Matthews**  
**She/Her | Third Citizen,**  
**Townsperson**  
BA Theatre Sophomore



**Trinity McMillan** *She/Her*  
**Third Chief**  
BA Theatre Sophomore



**Tise Oduwole** *He/Him*  
**Aderopo**  
Musical Theatre Minor First-Year



**Newton Okewoye** *He/Him*  
**Narrator, First Chief**  
Guest Actor



**Esther Oluokun**  
**Second Woman**  
Guest Actor



**Amber 'Dottie' Renée**  
**Owens** *She/They*  
**First Woman, Townsperson**  
BA Theatre, Emphasis  
in Musical Theatre Junior



**DePré Owens**  
**Olojo, Third Woman,**  
**Townsperson**  
Theatre Minor Senior

**CAST** (In alphabetical order)



**Joshua Passmore** *He/Him*  
*Gbonka, Townsperson*  
BA Theatre, Emphasis  
in Acting First-Year



**Leilani Powell** *She/Her*  
*Second Citizen, Fifth Citizen,*  
*Townsperson*  
BA Theatre Sophomore



**Alexxa Riley** *She/Her*  
*Iya Aburo, Townsperson*  
BA Theatre, Emphasis in  
Acting Junior



**Tony Tambi**  
*King Odewale*  
Guest Actor



**Djima Togbe**  
*Bokini*  
BA Dramatic Arts Senior



**Jomi Williams**  
*Ogun Priest*  
Guest Actor



**Biliena Zekarias** *She/Her*  
*Queen Ojuola*  
BA Theatre, Emphasis  
in Acting Senior

AND FEATURING  
**Al-amin Bada Agbeniyi**  
**Sekinat Bada Agbeniyi**  
**Angelo Marshall**  
**Elina Seravokaya**  
Children

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This performance contains a 15-minute intermission.

**CONTENT WARNING** Please be advised that this production includes depictions and descriptions of incest, suicide, and self harm.

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**MUSICIANS**

*Music Director Kayode Ajayi | Lead Percussions Samson Olawale*  
*Drums Festus Abiola | Percussions Babatunde O. Fayomi | Flute Amber Garcia*

**ADDITIONAL THE GODS ARE NOT TO BLAME PRODUCTION STAFF**

*Choreographer Anindo Marshall | Assistant Choreographers Alexxa Riley, Esther Oluokun | Fight Choreographer Jamie Cline | Production Deputies Kehara Edirisinghe, Lukas Garberg | Assistant Stage Managers Serena Feng, May Acero*  
*Production Manager Shih-wei Carrasco-Wu | Stage Management Mentor Leia Crawford*  
*Design Assistants Syd Lino, David James | Lead Props Auburn D'Artell, AJ Sunkara*  
*Scenic Mentor Tom Buderwitz | Costume Assistant Lurdes Loza | Wardrobe Supervisor Rachel Dickinson | Hair & Makeup Consultant/Costume Mentor Samantha Jones*  
*Assistant Lighting Design Lucy Lyu | Lighting Mentor Nita Mendoza*  
*A1 Matt Feeney | Projections Mentor Joe Shea | Technical Crew Smera Chandan, Oliver Chang, Nikolas Gephart, Cam Mason, Alex Ros, Violet Ross, Yulianna Shen, Angel Udofia, Julia von der Lacken*

# THE GODS ARE NOT TO BLAME

***The Gods Are Not to Blame*** by Ola Rotimi stands at a powerful intersection of classical tragedy and Yoruba cosmology. Adapted from *Oedipus Rex*, the play does more than transpose a Greek myth into an African setting; it reimagines the very terms of destiny, responsibility, and communal identity through a distinctly Yoruba worldview.

At the heart of the play lies a central tension: are we governed by fate, or are we architects of our own downfall? In the Yoruba philosophical tradition, destiny (*ayanmo*) is not a rigid sentence imposed by distant gods, but a complex interplay between choice, character, and consequence. The tragedy of Odewale, therefore, is not simply that he fulfills a prophecy, but that his temperament, pride, and refusal to listen become the very mechanism through which that destiny is realized.

This production approaches the play as both ritual and revelation. The world of the drama is communal, musical, and deeply symbolic. Language is heightened, gesture is deliberate, and rhythm—both spoken and percussive—carries meaning beyond words.

At the same time, the questions it raises are profoundly contemporary. Leadership, accountability, the burden of power, and the consequences of unchecked authority resonate far beyond the stage. The tragedy is not distant—it is immediate, familiar, and human.

**The gods may not be to blame.  
But we must ask—who is?**

**Bayo Akinfemi**  
*Artistic Director*  
*African Theatre Artistes Society (ATARS)*

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*For more information, visit [dramaticarts.usc.edu](http://dramaticarts.usc.edu).*

## **LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

*USC is built on the unceded land of the Tongva, Chumash and Kizh people. We at SDA acknowledge and honor the Tongva, Chumash and Kizh people/communities and wish to amplify that they are still here. We encourage everyone to find out whose ancestral land you live on and commit to our shared responsibility to be agents of change, and for each of us to consider our roles in reconciliation, decolonization and allyship.*

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