

PEPPERDINE Fine Arts Division Theatre Department Presents
A Mary Pickford-Stotsenberg Performance



POLAR BEARS, BLACK BOYS & PRAIRIE FRINGED ORCHIDS

DIRECTED BY NIC FEW
WRITTEN BY
VINCENT TERRELL DURHAM

DIGITAL PERFORMANCE
OCTOBER 1-2 • 7:30 PM
OCTOBER 3 • 2 PM

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY FINE ARTS DIVISION
THEATRE PROGRAM
presents

POLAR BEARS, BLACK BOYS & PRAIRIE FRINGED ORCHIDS

Thursday, October 1–Friday October 2, 2020 • 7:30 PM
Saturday, October 3, 2020 • 2 PM

by VINCENT TERRELL DURHAM

Director	Nic Few
Scenic Designer	Stewart O'Rourke
Costume Designer	Melanie Watnick
Lighting Designer/ Projection Designer	Kyle Wurtz*
Production Manager/ Technical Producer	Yelena Babinskaya
Sound Designer	Jeff Gardner
Dialect Coach	Hollace Starr

There will be a virtual talkback with the cast and creative team immediately after the Saturday, October 3 performance.

A separate viewing link for the talkback will be sent to registrants for all performances.

This production contains profanity; recommended for ages 13+.

This production uses gunfire sound effects and prop firearms.

***Lighting design in fulfillment of senior thesis project*

Polar Bears, Black Boys and Prairie Fringed Orchids was commissioned and originally developed by PlayGround (James A. Kleinmann, Artistic Director) in association with Planet Earth Arts (Michael Fried, Director).

Polar Bears, Black Boys & Prairie Fringed Orchids was presented as part of the inaugural Juneteenth Theatre Justice Project (Aldo Billingslea, Producer).

CAST

(in alphabetical order)

Peter	Sam Brock
Shemeka	Karese Frizell
Rita	Jada Henry
Tom	Britain Hope
Elijah.KJ Powell
Jaquan	George Preston
Molly.	Indiana Wilson

PRODUCTION STAFF

Technical Director	Rick Aglietti
Assistant Technical Director/Scene Shop Foreman	Stewart O'Rourke
Stage Manager.	Christopher Jerabek
Props Master	Connor McKenzie
Assistant Stage Manager	Coby Rogers
Assistant Directors	KJ Powell, Coby Rogers
Streaming Assistant	Sean Allinson
Sound Board Operator	Stella Engel
Projections Consultant	Nick Santiago
Sound Consultant	Dani Lobello
Assistant Costume Designer.Wesley Morrissey
AnimatorAlistair Macleod

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT



Vincent Terrell Durham is a scriptwriter, author and poet who first honed his storytelling skills as a stand-up comic in comedy clubs across the country. He was born and raised in Binghamton, NY to a family of vibrant storytellers themselves. His plays include *The Fertile River, Vol. 1* and *A Post Racial America*, among others.

Polar Bears, Black Boys & Prairie Fringed Orchids was co-commissioned and developed by PlayGround and Planet Earth Arts; it is a 2020 Orlando Shakes PlayFest finalist, a Eugene

O'Neill semifinalist and was a 2019 National New Play Network finalist. The piece was also the cornerstone for the 2020 inaugural Juneteenth Theatre Justice Project, an initiative to highlight Black theatre artists and new voices, address systemic racism in the theatre industry, and help raise much needed funds in support of Black theatres around the country.

ARTISTIC STAFF

Nic Few (Director) is a native of Atlanta, GA where he attended and graduated from Clark Atlanta University with a master's in education administration as well as a master's in fine arts from Brown University in Rhode Island. While attending Brown, Few was offered many opportunities to work at major flagship theaters nationally as well as internationally performing a variety of works from Shakespeare to August Wilson. As a member of the Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA), Few has been afforded a variety of opportunities in film, television, and web series. His most recent projects include NBC's *Chicago Med*, ABC's *The Catch*, Warner Brothers Picture's *CHIPS*, and InHale Entertainment & Full Frequency Media's award-winning shorts *90 Days* and *Burden*. His past credits include *Balls to the Wall*, *The Undying*, *The Chadwick Chronicles*, TV Land's *The Exes*, CBS' *Eleventh Hour*, NBC's *Go On*, TNT's *Major Crimes*, and TBS' *Blotter!* His regional, national, and international theater credits include numerous Shakespeare productions, such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Hamlet*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Julius Caesar*, as well as *Black Birds*, Molière's *The Misanthrope*, *End's Eve*, *Sex Acts*, Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, *The Ballad of Emmett Till*, *Black Nativity*, *The America Play*, *Topdog/Underdog*, *Confluence*, *Measure for Measure*, *Tartuffe*, *Tambourines to Glory*, *Spunk*, and *The Cherry Orchard*. Most importantly, Few is a proud visiting professor of theatre at Pepperdine University.

Melanie Watnick (Costume Designer) has been working as a professional costume designer for theatre and dance for over 16 years. Prior to her arrival at Pepperdine, Watnick designed and lectured at the University of California Irvine, University of California San Diego, and Hartnell College. Watnick's costume designs for dance have been seen in both national and international tours with such companies as ABTII, Ballet X, Corbin Dance, Company C, Complexions Contemporary Ballet, Kansas City Ballet, Singapore Dance Theatre, Malashock Dance, Backhaus Dance Ballet West, and Norwegian Cruise Line. Her theatre designs have included work with companies such as Julliard, Seattle Repertory, San Diego Repertory Theatre, The Barter, Great Lakes Theater Festival, South Coast Repertory Theatre, The Open Fist, Boston Court, The Flea, and Rouge Machine. Watnick received her MFA from University of California San Diego and a BA with a distinction in her major from the University of California Santa Barbara.

Kyle Wurtz (Lighting/Projections Designer) is a senior production and design major with an emphasis in lighting design from Rancho Cucamonga, CA. *Polar Bears* is Wurtz's fifth design at Pepperdine University, with his first being the student production of *Call Center* as a first-year student. He has also designed for *Well* and the student production of *Stay Because* in spring 2019. *Polar Bears* brings Wurtz's grand total of fully realized lighting designs up to thirteen. Wurtz is a Pickford-Stotsenberg Endowment recipient, courtesy of the Theatre Department.

Yelena Babinskaya (Production Manager/Technical Producer) is a member of the Production Design faculty at Pepperdine. She works all over L.A. and the country as a lighting, scenic, and costume designer. She holds an MFA from UCLA and a BA from UNC. Babinskaya is a member of United States Institute for Theatre Technology. She is very excited to be part of this adventure.

Jeff Gardner (Sound Designer) is an award-winning sound designer, foley artist, and actor. He has designed and performed throughout the country including the Geffen Playhouse, the Kirk Douglas Theatre, the Wallis Annenberg Center, A Noise Within, Antaeus Theatre Company, Boston Court Pasadena, Circle X Theatre, Echo Theater, the Shakespeare Theatre (DC), Arena Stage, the Kennedy Center, Williamstown Theatre Festival as well as the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in Scotland. Gardner can be seen at L.A. Theatre Works where he regularly performs live sound effects and is the resident sound designer for the Westridge School in Pasadena. To view more of his work, please visit jeffthomasgardner.net.

Hollace Starr (Dialect Coach) is an associate professor of theatre at Pepperdine University, where she teaches, coaches voice and dialects, and directs. Recently, Starr directed the West Coast Premiere of Mike Bartlett's *Earthquakes In London* at Rogue Machine Theatre, and she wrote and voiced the original prologue. The prologue will be published in the upcoming "Emergency" issue of *Imagined Theatres* for the video version of Pepperdine's COVID-cancelled production of *The Cherry Orchard*. Starr's other directing credits include *Falling*, *Circle Mirror Transformation*, and *Eurydice* at Pepperdine, and *Three Views Of The Same Object* at Rogue Machine Theatre. Starr has provided voice and dialect coaching for numerous Pepperdine Theatre productions, including *South Pacific*, *Heritage*, *Medea*, and *The Interference*. Starr's acting credits include *Yard Sale Signs* and *Milkmilklemonade* at Rogue Machine, *A Chicago Christmas Carol* at Crown City Theatre, *Small Tragedy* at the Odyssey, for which Starr received an Ovation Award nomination, *Vieux Carre* at the Ivy Substation, *Window Of Opportunity* at the Met, and productions at the Fountain Theatre, the Actors' Gang, and more. Starr performed her one-woman show *My Dad Came Dressed as Marilyn Monroe* at Highways Performance Space and at the Hysteria Festival in Toronto, Canada. She is a founding member of Rogue Machine Theatre Company and on the board of Trade City Productions, which operates Los Angeles' very first mobile theatre truck. Starr received her MFA in acting from UCLA's School of Theatre, Film and Television. She is a lifetime member of the Actors Studio and a designated Linklater Voice teacher.

Christopher Jerabek (Stage Manager) is a senior production and design major with an emphasis in scenic design and a minor in studio art from Lubbock, TX. His scenic designs have been seen in the Pepperdine student production *Rhinoceros*, *Call Center*, and *Stay Because*. Jerabek also served as the Scenic Designer, Props Master, and Assistant Director for *The Abode* at its Edinburgh Fringe Festival world premiere. He was recently the Scenic and Projections Designer for the 2020 *TEDx* event sponsored by Pepperdine University. Jerabek is a Regents' Scholar and a Pickford-Stotsenberg Scholarship recipient, courtesy of the Theatre Department.

Connor McKenzie (Properties Master) is a first-year theatre production design major with a planned minor in chemistry from Newbury Park, CA. This is his first mainstage production at Pepperdine, but his notable outside work includes *Cinderella: A British Pantomime* and *Little Shop of Horrors* at Newbury Park High School Technical Theatre, as well as summer pop-up events at the Thousand Oaks Civic Arts Plaza.

Coby Rogers (Assistant Stage Manager/Assistant Director) is a sophomore directing major from Lubbock, TX. His Pepperdine acting credits include *Miss Bennett: Christmas at Pemberley* (Mr. Bingley) and *Ragtime* (Ensemble), and his technical experience includes *Dido and Aeneas* (Rail Crew) and *Gianni Schicchi* (Stage Crew). He was Dallas Summer Musical's 2019 Best Actor, and was a 2019 Jimmy Awards nominee. Rogers is a Regents' Scholar, a Theatre Scholarship recipient, and Christian Leadership Award recipient.

KJ Powell (Assistant Director) is a junior theatre art major with an emphasis in acting from Miami, FL. This is his first Pepperdine credit. Powell has made appearances on ABC, Nickelodeon, and Lifetime TV shows and movies, including *Station 19*, *The Secret Life of Cheerleaders*, *Henry Danger*, *Young Sheldon*, and many more.

Sean Allinson (Streaming Assistant) is a junior double major in political science and production/design with an emphasis in lighting and sound from La Mirada, CA. He has worked backstage for theatre productions throughout high school, and has developed a love for tech. His Pepperdine credits include Assistant Stage Manager for the 2020 winter production of *Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley*, Sound Designer for the 2019 spring opera *Die Fledermaus*, and Sound Mixer/Assistant Sound Designer for the 2019 fall production of *Ragtime*. He is a recipient of the Ubben Endowed Theatre Scholarship as well as the Pepperdine Theatre Arts Scholarship courtesy of the Theatre Department.

Stella Engel (Assistant Stage Manager) is a first-year theatre production design major from Searcy, AK. Engel previously has worked as a Stage Manager and Costumer for *Into the Woods* and as a Costumer for *The Great Gatsby* at Searcy High School. Engel is a recipient of the Pepperdine Theatre Arts Scholarship.

Wesley Morrisey (Assistant Costume Designer) is a junior production and design major with an emphasis in scenic and srops design and a minor in Asian studies from Williston Park, NY. He has worked as Props Master for the Pepperdine student-led production of *Men On Boats*, and as the Technical Supervisor and Designer for the student-led Climate Change Theatre. His roles in Pepperdine Theatre productions include Assistant Sound Designer for the 2020 winter production of *Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley*, the Assistant Scenic Designer and Deck Manager for the 2019 fall production of *Ragtime*, and Assistant Stage Manager for the 2019 fall production of *Futureproof*. Morrisey has also served on the set crew for the productions of *Well*, *Die Fledermaus*, *Ragtime*, and *Falling*. He is a recipient of the Pepperdine Theatre Arts Scholarship. *You can see more of his work at wesleymorriseydesign.wixsite.com/wmdesign.*

CAST

(in alphabetical order)

Sam Brock (Peter) is a sophomore theater arts major with an emphasis in acting from Longmeadow, MA. This is his third Pepperdine University show, as he was cast in *The Cherry Orchard* (Stationmaster), and will be a part of Pepperdine's Edinburgh Fringe Festival in Summer 2021. Brock is a member of the Pepperdine Pickups, and also a part of the Pepperdine Improv Troupe. Brock is a Theatre Scholarship recipient, and is very excited to be a part of this process!

Karese Frizell (Shemeka) is a junior theatre arts acting major and marketing minor from Dallas, TX. Her Pepperdine credits include *Men on Boats* (Old Shady), *The Parade* (Wanda), and *Ragtime* (Sarah's Friend). Frizell is a two-year Pepperdine Student Government Association Senator and is a Pepperdine Theatre Scholarship recipient.

Jada Henry (Rita) is a sophomore theatre arts major with an emphasis in acting from Chicago, IL. She was seen in Pepperdine's production of *Ragtime* (Ensemble) in fall 2019. She was also a regional finalist in Center Theatre Group's August Wilson Monologue Competition in 2019. Henry is a Theatre Scholarship recipient and a member of Pepperdine's Black Student Association.

Britain Hope (Tom) is a senior theatre arts major with an emphasis in acting and a minor in computer science from Mission Viejo, CA. His Pepperdine credits include *Medea* (Medea's Son), *Curtains* (Johnny), *Ragtime* (Grandfather), and he was a selected cast member of the Pepperdine Edinburgh Fringe Festival Company of 2020. Hope is a Theatre Scholarship Recipient, a five-time Academic Dean's list honoree, and an alumni of the Pepperdine Lausanne Program.

KJ Powell (Elijah) is a junior theatre art major with an emphasis in acting from Miami, FL. This is his first Pepperdine credit. He has made appearances on ABC, Nickelodeon, and Lifetime TV shows and movies, including *Station 19*, *The Secret Life of Cheerleaders*, *Henry Danger*, *Young Sheldon*, and many more.

George Preston (Jaquan Wallace) is a senior theatre arts major with an emphasis in acting from Mobile, AL. His Pepperdine credits include *Medea* (Jason), *The Abode* (J), *Falling* (Bill Martin), *Well* (Jim Richardson/Little Oscar/Big Oscar/Nurse 2/Himself), *The Taming of the Shrew* (Christopher Sly/Katherine), and *Ragtime* (Coalhouse Walker Jr). Preston is a Theatre Scholarship recipient and pioneered Pepperdine's first August Wilson Showcase alongside Nic Few and KJ Powell.

Indiana Wilson (Molly) is a senior theatre arts acting student with a Hispanic studies minor from Palm Desert, CA. Wilson's Pepperdine credits include *The Cherry Orchard* (Charlotta), *Ragtime* (Ensemble), *The Taming of the Shrew* (Vincentio), *Curtains* (Carmen Bernstein), and *Medea* (Chorus). She is a Regents' Scholar, a Theatre Scholarship recipient, and the proud president of the Pepperdine Improv Troupe.

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PEPPERDINE FINE ARTS DIVISION UPCOMING DIGITAL PERFORMANCES

FINE ARTS CABARET

Kelly Todd, Director

A multi-day show featuring diverse performances
by various Pepperdine Theatre students.

Thursday, November 12–Friday, November 13, 2020 • 7:30 PM

Saturday, November 14, 2020 • 2 PM

Digital performances are free, but advanced registration is required.
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9/16/20.*

**in memoriam*

The Friends of the Theatre supports theatre students by hosting master classes, providing potluck lunches during production weeks, financially supporting Pepperdine's participation in the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, and more. For additional information on the Friends of the Theatre and to learn more about how to get involved, contact the Lisa Smith Wengler Center for the Arts at 310.506.4594.

The Mary Pickford Foundation and the late Dorothy and Edward Stotsenberg of Malibu have provided generous support to student scholarships for Pepperdine University fine arts majors.

A gift to Seaver College's Fine Arts Division helps to enhance the arts and advance excellence in teaching. If you have an interest in supporting the fine arts at Pepperdine, please contact Lou Drobnick, Senior Vice Chancellor for Advancement and Public Affairs, at 310.506.6432 or email lou.drobnick@pepperdine.edu.