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Spring 2021

Department of Theatre and Dance
Performances

4-2021

'Tasha

Department of Theatre and Dance

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Production Staff

Coordinator of Musical Theatre **Clay James**

Music Supervisor **Gregory Dlugos**

Production Manager **Peter J. Davis**

Production Associate **Cyndi Kumor**

Production Office Assistant **Dalton Gorden**

Scenic Supervisor **Erhard Rom**

Technical Director **Benjamin Merrick**

Assistant Technical Director **Daniel Graham**

Props Supervisor **Alison Merrick**

Costume Supervisor **Debra Otte**

Costume Shop Supervisor **Judith Evans**

Assistant Costume Shop Supervisor **Jeanette Aultz**

Drapers **Siobhan Nestor, Amanda Phillips-Balingit, Katie Pippin**

Hair and Makeup Mentor **Courtney Smith**

Lighting Supervisor **Cecilia Durbin**

Production Master Electrician **Christopher Thielking**

Studio Master Electrician **Michelle Tobias**

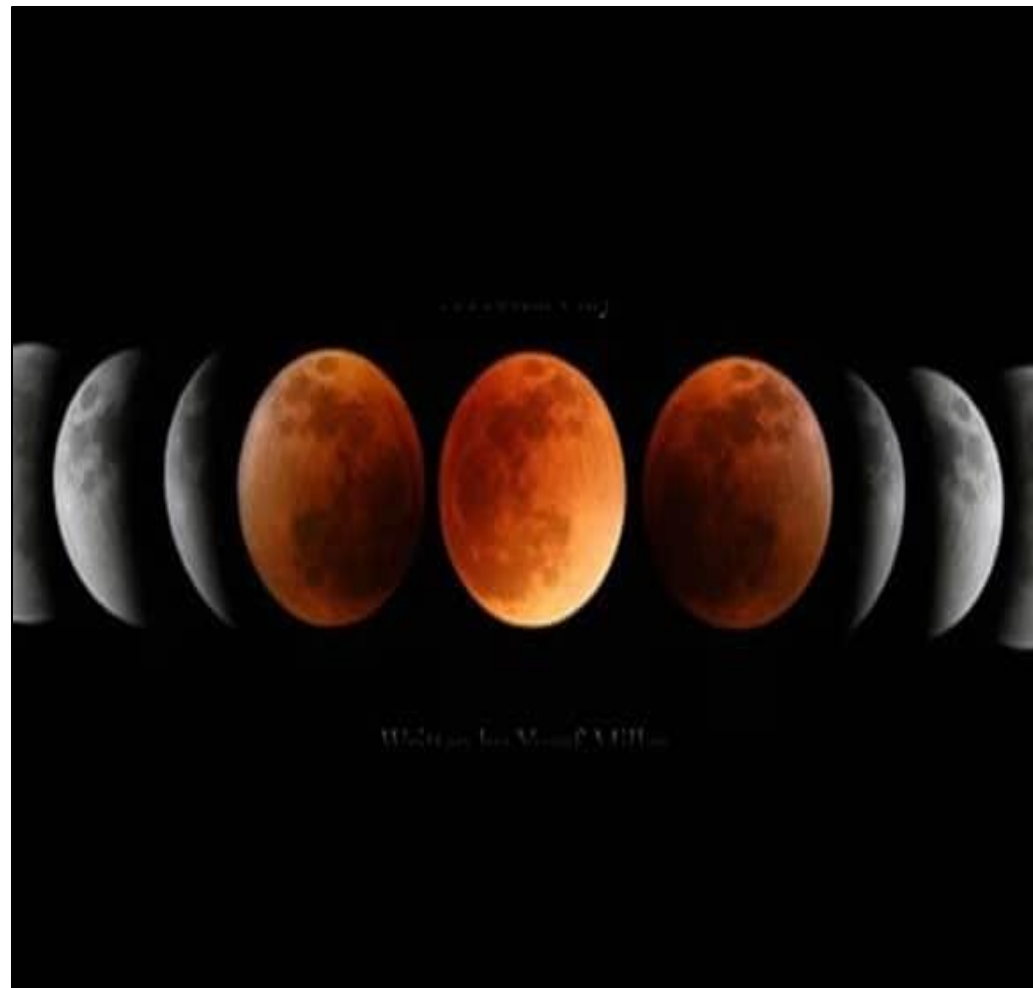
Sound Supervisor **Megan Culley**

Sound Associate **Kevin Johnson**

Finley Studio Electrician **Winnie Ng Zhen**

Stage Management Supervisor **Mysti Stay**

Tasha



Filmed April and May, 2021
Captured at The Kasser Theatre



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Mysti Stay - Stage Management Supervisor

Dr. Susan A. Cole, President
Daniel Gurskis, Dean, College of the Arts

Department of Theatre and Dance
Randy Mogleston, Chair

'Tasha

A Protest Play

by: Yusef Miler

Tia James - Director
Francesca Harper - Choreographer
Kali Oliver - Associate Choreographers
Jannette Fisher - Costume Designer
Prince Bawuah - Sound Designer
Kyrach Michael - Production Stage Manager
Peter J. Davis - Production Manager
Cyndi Kumar - Production Associate
Erhard Rom - Scenic Supervisor
Ben Merrick - Technical Director
Daniel Graham - Assistant Technical Director
Alison Merrick - Props Supervisor
Debra Otte - Costume Supervisor
Judith Evans - Costume Shop Supervisor
Jeanette Aultz - Assistant Costume Shop Supervisor
Katie Pippin - Draper
Amanda Phillips Balingit - Draper
Siobahn Nestor - Wardrobe Mentor
Cecilia Durbin - Lighting Supervisor
Christopher Theilking - Head Electrician
Michelle Tobias - Studio Electrician
Megan Culley - Sound Supervisor
Kevin Johnson - Sound Associate
As Actor, Yusef is an AEA and SAG-AFTRA unions member. He is a member of Lincoln Center Theater's Directors Lab and Tectonic Moment Work Institute. Yusef performs throughout the world - USA, Africa, Europe. France. Watch 'AMBITION'S DEBT', Yusef's Feature Film

Time and Place:
Mid-Afternoon February 2021

A month after the Presidential Inauguration (of Abigail Walker Waters)

Run Time:

Cast of Characters:

Taleel Smith - Amazing Grace
Marie-Pier Poulin - Chorus Member
Caitlyn Capre - Chorus Member
Jared Preston - Chorus Member
Miguel Santos - Messenger
Isaiah Robinson - Randolph "Big Randy" Brown
Fox Postier - White Officer
Jordan Boone - Attorney General
Jacklyn Azoff - Elizabeth Waters-Brown
A'Lysai Robinson - Natasha 'Tasha' Brown
Lily Johns - President Abigail Waters
Alexis Farrell - Lost Youth
Dale Harriis - Aaliyah Brown

Bios:

Yusef Miller (Playwright) is from Houston but resides near the Bronx river. Yusef has an MFA in Theatre and Dance from The University of California, San Diego. He has a B.A. in English from Morehouse College. He has a Lila Acheson Wallace Playwright Fellowship and a Le Comte Du Nouy Prize in Playwriting Excellence at The Juilliard School. As Playwright, Yusef is a 2020 Dramatist Guild Foundation Grant recipient. Yusef was a finalist for the New York Theatre Workshop 2050 Fellowship. He was a finalist for the Lincoln Center Artist Mentoring Lab Fellowship. Yusef's tragedy 'TASHA' was a semi-finalist at the Eugene O'Neill National Conference. Watch 'TASHA', workshopped at Hi-Arts, a home for Hip-Hop Art and Urban Culture. Yusef's allegory 'THE PROPHECY OF SHEEP' was a Williamstown Festival, Weissberger Nominee. It was performed in Paris/France at Théâtres de Nesle. It was workshopped at The Lark Play Development Center, Lincoln Center's Directors Lab, and The Classical Theatre of Harlem. As Screenwriter, watch 'DING DONG' Yusef's short film which premiered at Ripfest #10 Short Film Festival, NYC

debut. Yusef is driven to create a platform where homophobia and racism are abolished. He is Filmmaker, Producer, and Creator of ON PROGRAM, a short-film collaboration between writers and musicians from diverse communities. Collaborations reflect uplifting perspectives of people, places, and events long-depicted poorly.

Tia James (Director) is an actor, teacher, director, and vocal coach, currently a faculty member of UNC Professional Actor Training Program, and vocal coach and company member of PlayMakers Repertory Company. Tia has been seen on Broadway in *The Merchant of Venice* (Broadhurst Theater), and regional theater productions include *Julius Caesar* (PlayMakers Rep) *Native Son* (PlayMakers Rep), *Richard III* (Allentown Shakespeare); *Loving and Loving* (Stella Adler Studios); *The Winter's Tale* and *The Merchant of Venice* (The Public Theater's Shakespeare in the Park), *Much Ado About Nothing* (Two River Theater) and *Civilization* (all you can eat) (Woolly Mammoth Theater). Her television credits include "Nurse Jackie" and "Treme." She has been the vocal coach for PlayMakers Rep, having worked on such shows as *The Adventures of Robin Hood*, *Skeleton Crew*, *She Loves Me*, *Bewilderness*, *Jump*, *Life of Galileo*, and *How I Learned to Drive*. Tia served as the Associate Artistic Director for The Shakespeare Academy @ Stratford CT, was a teaching artist for NY's Public Theater Public Works Program, Mobile Unit, and *A Midsummer's Day Camp*; a teaching artist for DreamYard Arts Center, and has directed over a dozen plays including *Hamlet*, *Othello*, and *The Mystery Plays* at NYU Graduate Acting Program, *Richard III* at The Shakespeare Academy @ Stratford CT, *A Bright New Bright New Boise* with Atlantic Acting School, *Macbeth* with PlayMakers Mobile Shakes and *Constellations* with UNC PTAP. Tia is the recipient of the 2003 Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival; Irene Ryan Winner, the 2014 NYU Graduate Acting Diversity Mentorship Scholarship for Voice and Speech, and the 2020 and 2019 Michael Chekhov/Zelda Fichandler Scholarship. Tia received her BFA from Virginia Commonwealth University, and her MFA from NYU Graduate Acting.

Jared Preston (Chorus Member) is honored to be a cog in this machine of production that they've worked on tirelessly since the beginning of the semester. This rehearsal process has been the most inspirational experience he has had in a while. That is entirely due to the love shared between this cast, the stage management team, and the incomparable, lovely director, Tia James. If this audience experiences a fraction of the growth this cast has gone through, they will be walking away with something beautiful.

Taleel Smith (Amazing Grace) is a Senior B.F.A Theater major and this is his third production at Montclair State University. My first production was "In The Red and Brown Water" by Tarell Alvin McCraney. His second Production was "We Are Proud to Present a Presentation About the Herero of Namibia, Formerly Known as Southwest Africa, From the German Sudwestafrika, Between the Years 1884-1915" by Jackie Sibblies Drury. His final

Francesca Harper (Choreographer) is an internationally acclaimed multi-faceted artist. After being named Presidential Scholar in the Arts and performing at the White House, Francesca attended Columbia University for a summer studying philosophy and computer programming, but could not deny a passion inside that moved her to pursue a professional career as a dancer. Francesca joined the Dance Theater of Harlem's Junior Company that same summer and joined the main Company the following year. Francesca performed soloist roles with the DTH, such as the Hostess in Bronislova Nijinska's *Les Biches* and soloist in *Swan Lake*. After Dance Theater of Harlem, she fell in love with the choreography of William Forsythe. She joined his company, Ballet Frankfurt, quickly started performing lead roles, and soon after was promoted to Principal. Harper has choreographed works for Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Ailey II, Tanz Graz, Hubbard Street II, Dallas Black Dance Theater, and her own company, The Francesca Harper Project, which was founded in 2005. Her TV appearances include *Boardwalk Empire*, *David Letterman*, and *The Oprah Winfrey Show*. Harper also served as ballet consultant for the feature film, *Black Swan*, by Darren Aronofsky, and starring Natalie Portman. She received a *Living History* Award in 2013 during Black history month from Long Island University, as well as the Innovation and Technology Award for her choreography for Fashion Week with designer Louis Vuitton. Harper enjoys her appointment as an adjunct professor at New York University, a former Associate Professor at Barnard College, and continues the vital role of teacher and choreographer for The Ailey School, Fordham University's BFA Program, and the Susan Batson Studio

Isaiah Robinson (Randolph "Big Randy" Brown), a freshman BFA Acting student, is honored and humbled to be in his first MSU, main stage production. He'd like to thank his wonderful cast for their love, support, and new found friendship. He'd also like to thank his director, Tia James, for being a role model, inspiration, and guide throughout this process and for his career. Shout out to stage management for their positivity, reliability, and patience. Lastly, he'd like to thank his family for their never ending support and love.

A'Lysai Robinson (Natasha "Tasha" Brown), a freshmen BFA Acting Major is honored to be Tasha in her first Montclair State University main stage production. She is extremely thankful to her cast who continues to inspire her everyday. She would like to thank her director Tia James for her teachings, love and support and encouragement throughout this entire process. She'd like to thank all who were a part of this production and made it come to life. Last but not least she'd like to thank her mom, who continues to be in her corner with love as she seeks her higher education and career.

Miguel Santos (Messenger) is currently in his final year of training in the undergraduate BFA Acting program at Montclair State University. This is his sixth production while being in MSU with others such as *Dog Sees God*, *The Bully Tour*, *Lysistrata*, *Comedy Lab!*, and *The Ultimate Cahoot*.

production is "Tasha" written by Yusef Miller. In "Tasha" he played the Blind Prophet Amazing Grace. He is skilled in dancing, and drums. He loves to laugh and joke but most of all he loves the arts!

Alexis Farrell (Lost Youth) is a Junior BFA Acting major at MSU. This is her 3rd production in the Theatre and Dance Program. This experience has been so informative, enlightening, and inspiring and one that she will never forget. She's so grateful for this cast/crew and the inseparable bond they've been able to create throughout this process. ig: @alexis_farrell

Jacklyn Azoff (Elizabeth Waters-Brown) is a junior actress in the Montclair State University BFA Acting class of 2022. She has loved performing and acting her entire life. She attended LaGuardia High School in New York City where she earned a drama diploma. She has loved the experience of working on Tasha and is grateful to get to work with the cast and crew who have supported each other greatly through this process.

Dale Harris (Aaliyah Brown) is African American and resides in Plainfield, NJ. She is 21 years old and a junior in the BFA acting program, with a minor in Entrepreneurship. Dale has been training professionally for seven years. She is a member of the AEDI Committee (Access, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion) for the Theater Department. Dale is a spoken word poet, and the CEO of her hair oil business; Nourished Roots. Dale's mantra to keep her going in life is "Everything happens for a reason, we don't know why, and we don't know how, but in the end we will figure it out.

Jordan Boone (Attorney General) is from Philadelphia, PA. He's been involved in and has had a passion for theatre since the 8th grade. Serving the past few years as a BFA acting student at Montclair State University, he's performed in other productions such as *Anonymous*, *Theatre on the Move* and *Lysistrata*. He's blessed to have these experiences and would like to show his gratitude and appreciation to his closest friends and family for their support and encouragement!

He is eager to share with the world this project in development which is *TASHA*, with the guidance of director Tia James and playwright Yusuf Miller all of this was made possible and brought to life.

Marie-Pier Poulin (Chorus Member) is a French-Canadian performer from Quebec City. She moved to Montreal in 2015 to attend a three-year musical theatre conservatory program at Collège Lionel-Groulx. Upon graduating, she was cast as "Elle Woods" in the first French production of *Legally Blonde the Musical*, where she was able to put her learning into practice. Still craving further knowledge in the craft of acting while also wanting to discover more about the American performing arts industry, she decided to move closer to New York City to pursue her B.F.A in acting at Montclair State University, where she is currently a Sophomore.

Caitlyn Capre (Chorus Member) is a sophomore BFA actor at Montclair State University. Raised in both East Windsor, NJ and Atlanta, GA. Last spring she played #14 in *The Wolves* here at MSU. She is so excited to have the opportunity to work on another play at school. Caitlyn is blessed to be a part of 'TASHA. She believes one of the most valuable things we have to offer is our voice. As a member of The Chorus, the people have the ability to speak volumes against injustice. She would like to thank Tia, Yusuf, Francesa, and everyone in the cast and crew for being so nurturing and supportive.

Fox Leon Postier (White Officer) is honored to be a part of telling such an important story. He is a junior in Montclair State's BFA acting program. You may have seen him as Russian Sea Man in *Orlando* or Frederick in *The Rover*. Fox is a passionate artist and performer who wants to explore all life has to offer; spread light, love and high vibrations. He wants to teach people about the magic of life, and learn from passionate people. Love to all.

Lily Johns (President Abigail Waters) is a Senior BFA Acting Major and is beyond proud that her final production at MSU was with this absolute dream team. Other credits at MSU include *The Wolves* (#7) and *Lysistrata* (Lampito). Lily would like to thank the cast and creative team for creating the most supportive and brave space to tell this exquisite story.

PRODUCERS

**Alex Grabiec
Louis Biondolillo
Jason Dubinski
Lance Trusty**

**Michael Konopka
Parizaad Mohammadi
Kieran Brennan
Frankie Marrone
Shawn Palmer
Zack Jiang
Danielle Vacca
Angelica Wilson
Lauren Cabrera
Elliott Whittington-Booker
Radha Martinez
Andrew Malik
Annette Fornah
Jenna Reilly
Michael DeMateo
Justin Urbealis
Jozyah Ramos
Matthew Gomez**

Production Crew

**Carter Winner
Gary Brown
Anton Specht
Julz Radley
Daniel Currie
Skylar Seitzman
Dillon Hoffman
Michael Banovic
Brianna Nichols
Amanda Fantasia**

Faculty Advisor

Stuart MacLelland