

DALLAS THEATER CENTER 2025-2026 SEASON

PRESENTED BY  **TEXAS
INSTRUMENTS**

FAT HAM

JANUARY 30 - FEBRUARY 8, 2026
KALITA HUMPHREYS THEATER



ROOM FOR THE ENTIRE CAST



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DALLAS THEATER CENTER

Kevin Moriarty | Executive Director
Jonathan Norton | Interim Artistic Director

in association with
STAGE WEST THEATRE

Dana Schultes | Executive Producer
Garret Storms | Associate Producer

PRESENTS

FAT HAM

By James Ijames

Directed By vickie washington

WITH

Landon Blanton
Calvin Gabriel
Jori Jackson
Tyler Ray Lewis
Nikka Morton

Caleb Mosley
Cherish Robinson
Edmund Simpson II
Kimberly Turner
Zachary J. Willis

SCENIC DESIGN

Donna Marquet

COSTUME DESIGN

Whitney Coulter

LIGHTING DESIGN

Luke Atkison

SOUND DESIGN

Crescent Haynes

CHOREOGRAPHER

La' Hunter Smith

PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER

Tiffany Cromwell*

PRODUCTION MANAGER

Ashley Oliver

DIRECTOR OF PRODUCTION

Andrew J. Brown

"Fat Ham" is presented by arrangement with
Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc.
www.concordtheatricals.com

New York Premiere Co•Production by
The Public Theater

Oskar Eustis, Artistic Director Patrick Willingham, Executive Director
and

National Black Theatre

Sade Lythcott, Chief Executive Officer Jonathan McCrory, Executive Artistic Director

FAT HAM was commissioned by and received its World Premiere as a filmed production at The Wilma Theater, Philadelphia:
Blanka Zizka, Yury Urnov, James Ijames, and Morgan Green, Co-Artistic Directors
Leigh Goldenberg, Managing Director

FUELING A *VIBRANT* ARTS COMMUNITY FOR *DALLAS*



TACA

taca-arts.org

From Movement Theater | La Magasin: The French Abomination | Photo by Courtney Amaro

CAST IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

Tio.....Zachary J. Willis**
 Juicy.....Tyler Ray Lewis*
 Tedra.....Nikka Morton*
 Rev/Pap.....Calvin Gabriel
 Opal.....Jori Jackson*
 Larry.....Caleb Mosley
 Rabby.....Cherish Robinson*

UNDERSTUDIES

Juicy/Tio.....Landon Blanton
 Tedra/Opal/Rabby.....Kimberly Turner
 Rev/Larry.....Edmund Simpson II

SETTING

A house in North Carolina.
 Could also be Virginia or Maryland or Tennessee.
 It is not Mississippi or Alabama or Florida.
 That's a different thing all together.

TIME

The American South, to me, exists in a kind of liminal space between the past and the present with an aspirational relationship to the future that is contingent on your history living in the South. All that to say...I'm writing this play from inside the second decade of the twenty-first century. This world aesthetically sits anywhere in the four-six decades preceding the current moment.

CREATIVE SUPPORT & CREW

Assistant Director/Dramaturg.....Harold Steward
 Production Assistant.....Maddie McDonald
 Music Consultant/Dramaturg.....Djoré Nance
 Scenic Supervisor.....Rose Tharp
 Carpenters.....Kiki Chavez, Craig Elam
 Colin 'Big Fish' Hancock, Rose Tharp
 Fight Choreographer.....Jeffrey Colangelo
 Stage Operations Manager.....Squeak Henderson
 Wardrobe/Wigs, Hair & Makeup Technician.....Levi Richey
 Lighting Programmer.....Caroline Hodge
 Light Board Operator.....Jason R. English
 Electricians.....Chanlyr Jordan, Luci Nardi, Oso Padilla
 Michael Price, Leo Thomas, Brayden Young
 A1 Audio Engineer.....Jesse Humphreys
 A2 Mic Technician.....Taahira Walker

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Dallas Theater Center is a member of the League of Resident Theatres; a constituent of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for the nonprofit professional theater; and Visit Dallas.

Dallas Theater Center's Production staff are responsible for the building and making of scenery, props, paints, costumes, wigs, hair & make-up, lighting, and sound in this production

+Member of the Diane and Hal Brierley Resident Acting Company
 *Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.



The Director is a Member of the STAGE DIRECTORS AND CHOREOGRAPHERS SOCIETY, a national theatrical labor union.



The scenic, costume, lighting, sound and projection designers in LORT Theatres are represented by United Scenic Artists, Local USA-829 of the IATSE.



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 **TEXAS INSTRUMENTS**



TO BE OR NOT TO BE THE CHOICE OF *FAT HAM*

Executive Director Kevin Moriarty on *Fat Ham*

Dear friends,

When *Fat Ham* premiered at The Public Theater in 2022, it heralded the arrival of a bold new voice in American playwriting. The play quickly moved to Broadway and was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Drama.

Fat Ham is a work of remarkable confidence and generosity, inviting us into a very specific world: a southern Black family gathered for a backyard barbecue. There is music, food, and the easy familiarity that comes from long-shared history. But there are also tensions simmering beneath the surface: questions of power, loyalty, and inheritance. Secrets abound. James Ijames captures these family dynamics with insight, affection, and humor.

But *Fat Ham* is not simply a family comedy. Indeed, the play is built on a story that has defined our understanding of tragedy for centuries. Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is infinite in its insights, but at its core it revolves around a single, devastating question: "To be or not to be?" Over the course of the play, Hamlet comes to understand that for his world to move from chaos to harmony, he must choose *not* to be. His death becomes the price of stability and peace. In a Shakespearean tragedy, suffering and loss are the unavoidable cost of advancement.

That tragic logic has proven remarkably durable for centuries, as artists have repeatedly reshaped *Hamlet* to speak to new audiences in new times. James Ijames is working squarely within this tradition, but he is doing something more searching than simply updating the story or changing its setting. In *Fat Ham*, he questions the form of tragedy itself.

In *Fat Ham*, tragedy is transformed into something else entirely. It proposes a deliberate refusal to accept suffering as destiny, and, instead, embraces a powerful celebration of Black joy onstage. It is a reminder that theater, at its best, does more than reflect the world as it is — it invites us to imagine what it might yet become.

None of this would be possible on our stage without the tireless dedication of the ever-joyful Jonathan Norton, Interim Artistic Director, and the extraordinary artists he has assembled, working alongside our colleagues at Stage West Theatre in Fort Worth. I am deeply grateful to all of them, and to you, for joining us today. I hope you'll *Stay Late* after the show and engage in a conversation about the ideas of the play with the cast and with one another.

I'll see you in the lobby.

Kevin Moriarty

Executive Director



**LANDON
BLANTON**



**CALVIN
GABRIEL**



**JORI
JACKSON**



**TYLER RAY
LEWIS**



**NIKKA
MORTON**



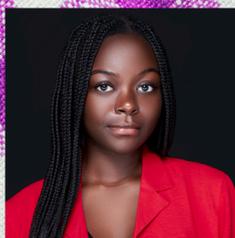
**CALEB
MOSLEY**



**CHERISH
ROBINSON**



**EDMUND
SIMPSON II**



**KIMBERLY
TURNER**



**ZACHARY J.
WILLIS**

**FAT
HAM
CAST**

MEET THE ARTISTS

LANDON BLANTON UNDERSTUDY | JUICY | TIO

is honored to be making his DTC debut. He is a recent graduate from the University of Texas at Arlington receiving his BFA in Musical Theatre with a minor in Dance. You may have seen him as Thought 3 in *A Strange Loop* (Circle Theatre), Thalia in *Xanadu* (Uptown Players), or Chip in *On The Town* (UTA). I would like to thank my family, friends and mentors for collaborating with me to make something meaningful. **Instagram:** @landon_blanton | **Website:** landonblanton.com

CALVIN GABRIEL REV | PAP

a native of Dallas, Gabriel is a Dallas-based performer who has worked in theater and film in the area. I would like to dedicate this performance to my beautiful wife Shaundra. Your support means everything to me. Gabriel has worked with Dallas Drama Company, Dallas Theater Center, Undermain Theater, Irving Arts Center, Mesquite Art Center, GRIOT, Urban Arts Center, Stage West Theater and Jubilee Theater. He has been seen in film and local commercial work. *Naughty or Nice* (Tubi - Pluto TV), *Low Key*, *America's Dream*, *FILA Corporation*, *America's Most Wanted*, *TRANE air systems*, *Local industrials*, *Mavericks*, Web series *Te\$timoney*. Enjoying the gift of life. Namaste.

JORI JACKSON OPAL

is a multi-disciplinary theatre artist and Shreveport, Louisiana native. Her stage experience is rooted in devised storytelling and traditional performance art that focuses on the upliftment and amplification of black, BIPOC, womxn, youth and queer centric works. She is a BFA graduate of Northwestern State University of LA. Her most recent acting credits include Opal in *Fat Ham* (Stage West), Passenger 1 in *Ain't No Mo* (Soul Rep Theatre Co.), Ensemble in *YANGA* (Soul Rep/Cara Mia, Mulatto Theatre Co.), CJ in *The Last Stop On Market Street* (Dallas Children's Theater), Liesl in *LUCHADORA*, Earthroot in *Where Earth Meets The Sky* (Cara Mia Theatre Co.) Jori is member of the 2025 Inaugural Certified Sensitivity Specialist Cohort at Ann James & Associates and received the 2024 Irma P. Hall Arts Medal for Community Arts Service for her role as Community Partnerships Programs Manager at Broadway Dallas. **Instagram:** itsjorijackson

TYLER RAY LEWIS JUICY

Becky in *Waitress* (Oregon Cabaret Theatre), Pabbie in *Frozen*, US Audrey II in *Little Shop of Horrors*, Featured Soloist in *RENT* (TUTS), Jarene/Church Lady in *The Color Purple* (Casa Manana), Wicked Witch in *The Wizard of Oz* (Queensbury Theatre), Sandra Bollock in *Everybody's Talking About Jamie* (Uptown Players), Deloris Van Cartier in *Sister Act*, Fairy Godmother in *Cinderella*, Emcee in *Cabaret*, Glinda in *The Wizard of Oz*, Frank-N-Furter in *The Rocky Horror Show* (The Theatre Company), Sheldon/Camille in *Junie B. Jones* (Casa Manana). **Other:** BS in AG Journalism from Texas A&M University and an MA in Journalism from the University of Texas at Austin.
Instagram: @tylerraylewis

NIKKA MORTON TEDRA

is an actor, singer, and entertainer that has performed locally, regionally and nationally. In 2018 she decided to devote all of her time and energy to her art and her love for the stage. Since then Nikka has gone on to perform in such theaters as Theatre 3 (*Passing Strange*, *Solstice*, *Little Shop of Horrors*); Jubilee Theatre (*God's Trombones*, *Smokey Joe's Café*, *Beehive!*); Granbury Theatre (*Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*); Firehouse Theater (*To Kill a Mockingbird*); Uptown Theatre (*Aida*); WaterTower Theatre (*A Raisin in the Sun*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*); StageWest Theatre (*What to Send Up When it Goes Down*, *Fat Ham*) When Nikka is not on the theater's stage, she can be found performing locally with the bands she is a part of Linnny Nance and Network, I.Tina Tribute band, and The David Whiteman Band. Nikka is thrilled to bring her energy to the Dallas Theater Center stage.
Instagram: nikkasmusic | **Facebook:** Nikka Morton | **TikTok:** nikkamo4u

CALEB MOSLEY LARRY

is a Texas-raised actor and theatremaker. Some of his recent work includes *Action* (Undermain Theatre), *Time Stands Still* (Teatro Dallas), *Julius Caesar* (Shakespeare Dallas), *Twelfth Night* (Shakespeare Dallas), and *The Seagull* (T3). Caleb holds his BFA in Theatre from SMU and is a proficient-in-practice SoulWork artist, trained by Tiana Kaye Blair (SoulWorkMethod.com). Caleb would like to thank his family, friends, and mentors for their unwavering support and guidance.
Instagram: @calebmoseley | **Website:** calebmoseley.com

MEET THE ARTISTS

CHERISH ROBINSON RABBY

Marie & Rosetta as Rosetta at Indiana Repertory Theatre; *Into the Woods* as the Witch at Dallas Theater Center; *Stede Bonnet*, *A Fcking Pirate Musical** and *Little Shop of Horrors* as Crystal at Theatre Three; *100 Days* at Circle Theatre; *Scrooge in Rouge* at Stage West; *Sister Act* as Deloris Van Cartier at Savannah Theatre (GA) and WaterTower Theatre; *Detroit '67* as Bunny at Jubilee Theatre; *Madagascar* as Gloria the Hippo at Casa Mañana. **TV/Film/Tours:** voice and vocal production featured on ABC's *Grey's Anatomy*, HBO's *Big Little Lies*, and the film *My Spy*. She has collaborated with artists including Erykah Badu and Elle King. Recipient of the 2020 Column Award for Best Actress and released her debut Christmas album, *Love's Holiday*, in November 2024, created with Dallas-Fort Worth musicians and singers. She is a vocal coach, music director, and is currently writing her book *The Artist's Parallel*. **Website:** CherishLoveRobinson.com

EDMUND SIMPSON II UNDERSTUDY | REV | LARRY

A Dallas native and KD Actors Conservatory graduate, Edmund is thrilled to return to the Kalita. He previously assistant directed DTC's *Trouble in Mind* on this stage in 2022. Favorite roles include Igor (*Young Frankenstein*), the Lion (*The Wiz*), and the Ghost of Christmas Present (*A Christmas Carol*). This marks Edmund's first understudy role, and he's overjoyed to join the brilliantly talented *Fat Ham* family—especially under the direction of vickie washington. "Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced." —James Baldwin

KIMBERLY TURNER UNDERSTUDY | TEDRA | OPAL | RABBY

is jubilant to be making her DTC debut. She is a recent graduate from the University of Texas at Arlington, where she earned her BFA in Acting with summa cum laude. Recent credits include *The Seagull* and *Pirates of Penzance* (Theatre Three), *The Visit* (Amphibian Stage), *Cabaret* (Theatre Arlington), *Almost Maine* (Onstage in Bedford), and *Seize The King* (UTA Theatre Arts). Kimberly is grateful to be a part of the backyard barbecue that will take the audience on a beautiful journey. She is blessed by her family, friends, and mentors' support to create captivating art. www.thekimberlyt.com

ZACHARY J. WILLIS TIO

is a member of Dallas Theater Center's Diane and Hal Brierley Resident Acting Company where his credits include: *A Christmas Carol*, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *Waitress*, *Shane*, *Public Works Dallas' The Little Mermaid*, *I AM DELIVERED'T* (Irma P. Hall Black Theatre Award), *The Rocky Horror Show*, *Into the Woods*, *Trouble in Mind*, *Public Works Dallas' The Odyssey*, *Our Town/Nuestro Pueblo*, and *Tiny Beautiful Things*. Local/Regional: Stage West; Actors Theatre of Louisville; Theatre Three; Casa Mañana; Circle Theatre; Jubilee Theatre; Uptown Players; TUTS; Stages Houston. BFA Musical Theatre, Sam Houston State University. Matthew 5:16.

Website: zacharyjwillis.com | @zacharyjwillis

JAMES IJAMES PLAYWRIGHT

is a Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright, director and educator. James' plays have been produced by Flashpoint Theater Company, Orbiter 3, Theatre Horizon, Wilma Theatre, Theatre Exile, Azuka Theatre (Philadelphia, PA), The National Black Theatre, JACK, The Public Theater (NYC), Hudson Valley Shakespeare Theater, Steppenwolf Theatre, Definition Theatre, Timeline Theater (Chicago, IL) and Shotgun Players (Berkeley, CA) and have received development with PlayPenn New Play Conference, The Lark, Playwright's Horizon, Clubbed Thumb, Villanova Theater, Wilma Theater, Azuka Theatre and Victory Garden.

James is the recipient of the 2011 F. Otto Haas Award for an Emerging Artist and two Barrymore Awards, for Outstanding Direction of a Play for *The Brothers Size* with Simpatico Theatre Company and *Gem of the Ocean* with Arden Theatre. James is a 2015 Pew Fellow for Playwriting, the 2015 winner of the Terrence McNally New Play Award (for *WHITE*), the 2015 Kesselring Honorable Mention Prize winner (for *...Miz Martha*), a 2017 recipient of the Whiting Award, and a recipient of the 2019 Kesselring Prize (for *Kill Move Paradise*), a 2020 Steinberg Prize and the 2022 Pulitzer Prize in Drama.

James was a founding member of Orbiter 3, Philadelphia's first playwright producing collective. He received a B.A. in Drama from Morehouse College in Atlanta, GA and an M.F.A. in Acting from Temple University in Philadelphia, PA. James an Associate Professor of Theatre at Villanova University.

@FatHamBway

MEET THE ARTISTS

vickie washington DIRECTOR

is a theatre artist and cultural worker who directs, acts, produces, and teaches; she previously directed *What to Send Up When It Goes Down* and *Are You Now or Have You Ever Been...* for Stage West, and appeared as the First Lady in *POTUS*. **Directing credits:** *The Mountaintop*, *The Great Lonely Roamer*, *Schoolgirls*; or *the African Mean Girls Play*, *Last Stop on Market Street*, *Mississippi Goddamn*, *Harriet Jacobs*, *Fences*, *Solstice- a New Holiday Adventure*, *Passing Strange*, *The Ballad of Jane Elkins*, *Single Black Female*, *Sunset Baby*, *Four Little Girls: Birmingham 1963*, *Fabulation*, *Angela's Mixtape*, *Speech and Debate*, and *The Little Tommy Parker Celebrated Colored Minstrel Show*. As director she has received two Irma P. Hall Black Theatre Awards and recognition from the Dallas Observer for best director in 2015. **Acting credits** include on-camera and stage work in *Random Acts of Flyness* (HBO); Indie films, *They Charge for the Sun*, *Swimming in Your Skin Again* (official Sundance selection); *Steps of Faith*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, *Dreaming Emmett*, *Primer for a Failed Superpower* directed by Rachel Chavkin, *Crowns*, ...and *Jesus Moonwalks the Mississippi, for colored girls...*, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *Piano Lesson*, *Contribution*, and *From the Mississippi Delta*. vickie is founder and producing director of r. t. w. - reading the writers, a readers theatre performance organization. A proud member of Actors Equity and the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, she deeply values the gift of theatre and the powerful ways in which it can be utilized to tell the stories of the African Diaspora. #onandup

LA'HUNTER SMITH CHOREOGRAPHER

is a native of Washington D.C., was trained at the Duke Ellington School of Arts, studied West African Dance with African Heritage Dancers & Drummers with Baba Melvin Deal, Musical Theater with Carol Foster's D.C Youth Ensemble, & Mike Malone's Street Theater, and received her B.A. at Texas Womans University. La'Hunter was a soloist with the Dallas Black Dance Theater, a member of Bruce Woods Dance Co., toured with Lula Washington Dance Co., and has founded her own company La'Hunter In Flight Dance Theatre. She has choreographed and taught throughout the metroplex with Texas Ballet Theater, Ballet Academy Texas, TWU, and TCU and is presently resident choreographer with the Soul Rep Theater Company and a proud 5 Time Nominee and 2-time winner of Irma P Hall Black Theater Awards.

TIFFANY CROMWELL STAGE MANAGER

first worked with Stage West as Assistant Stage Manager for *Ann*, and has also been Stage Manager for several shows, most recently *Primary Trust*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *POTUS*, *Once Upon a Mattress*, *Cruel Intentions: the '90s Musical*, *Guards at the Taj*, *Into the Breeches!*, *What to Send Up When It Goes Down*; Production Manager for *In Search of the Sublime*, *The Naughty List*, and *Everything Will Be Fine*; Assistant Director for *A Funny Thing...*, *Dramaturg for Are You Now or Have You Ever Been...*. She graduated from The University of Texas at Arlington with a BFA in Design and Technology. She also served as the Assistant Stage Manager at PCPA for several shows including *Cinderella*, *The Pirates of Penzance* as well as Stage Manager for *Much Ado About Nothing*. Other credits include ASM for Dallas Summer Musicals High School Musical Theatre Awards, SM Intern for *Dreamgirls* at Dallas Theater Center, SM for Dallas Pride Festival and ASM for *It Shoulda Been You* at Uptown Players. She is a recipient of the 2020 Bill Garber Young Theatre Artist Award.

JEFFREY COLANGELO FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHER

is the artistic director of Dallas's Prism Movement Theater. In 2020 his company received four Critics Forum Awards and recognition from the Dallas Observer for its work in providing COVID-safe live performances through its newest original piece, *Everything Will Be Fine*. Colangelo is a writer, director, producer, and fight director/choreographer. Since 2012 he has choreographed fights for theater and film across the United States. In addition to Prism Movement Theater, his work has been seen in productions by numerous companies in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, among them Dallas Opera, Cara Mia Theatre Co., Undermain Theatre, WaterTower, Theater Three, and the Dallas Theater Center. Colangelo graduated from Southern Methodist University in 2013 with a degree in Theater Studies. He most recently provided fight choreography at Stage West for *Between Riverside and Crazy* and *Witch*.

DONNA MARQUET SET DESIGNER

has designed for the Dallas Theater Center, Shakespeare Dallas, Watertower Theatre, Circle Theatre, Jubilee Theater, Lyric Stage, Uptown Players, South Coast Repertory, Center Theatre Group, Theatre @ Boston Court, Sacred Fools, Open Fist Theatre, Colony Theatre and The Evidence Room among others. She has won numerous awards including the Bob Z Career Achievement Award from the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle. She is currently a faculty member at The University of North Texas.

MEET THE ARTISTS

WHITNEY COULTER COSTUME DESIGNER | DRAG CO-DESIGNER

served as Costume Designer at Stage West for *Marjorie Prime* and *Between Riverside & Crazy*. After earning her BFA in Acting and Directing from Sam Houston State, she moved to the DFW Metroplex where she has been working as an actress, costumer, director, and now educator for 11 years. **Design Credits:** *Hang, Our Dear Dead Drug Lord* (Second Thought); *SEX ED* (Cry Havoc Theatre Company); *How I Got Over, To Be Young Gifted and Black, Nina Simone: Four Women* (Jubilee Theatre); *Hurricane Diane and The Monarch*, (Echo Theatre), (co-pro with Soul Rep); *Matilda, Macbeth, Picasso at the Lapin Agile, Noises Off, Antigone Now, Newsies, Tartuffe, Fiddler on the Roof, Into the Woods, The Insanity of Mary Girard and All In The Timing* (Ursuline Academy). **Directing/AD:** *Maytag Virgin and Funny You Don't Act Like a Negro* (Theatre Three), *Bridges: Sisters of Salem* (Flexible Grey), *How I Got Over* (Jubilee Theatre), and *Well Intentioned White People* (Staged Reading - Flexible Grey).

LUKE ATKISON LIGHTING DESIGNER | DRAG CONSULTANT/CO-DESIGNER

is from Branson, Missouri and a graduate of Texas Christian University. His previous design outings with Stage West have included *Cruel Intentions, What to Send Up When It Goes Down, Life Sucks, Deer, The Nether* and *Stupid F*cking Bird*. He has designed the lighting for Theatre TCU and Watertower Theatre productions as well as the lighting and scenic elements for productions with Tarrant County College campuses—all here within the state. Outside of Texas, Atkison was previously the resident scenic, lighting, and projections designer for Titusville Playhouse in the Orlando area, designing over 100 productions in his time there. Additional recent credits include work with Flat Rock Playhouse (Flat Rock, NC) and The Henegar Center (Melbourne, FL).

CRESENT HAYNES SOUND DESIGNER

received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Theatre Arts Technology, with a focus in Sound Design from Howard University in 2012. Since then Cresent's credits include: *Your Wife's Dead Body* (Second Thought Theatre), *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (Dallas Theater Center), *Ain't No Mo'* (Soul Rep Theatre), *The Hatmaker's Wife* (Circle Theatre), *SLEEPOVA* (Olney Theatre Company), *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (University of Rochester), *POTUS* (Everyman Theatre), *Show Way the Musical* National Tour (presented by The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts), *One in Two* (Mosaic Theater Company), *A Strange Loop* (Woolly Mammoth Theatre), *Intimate Apparel* (Theatre J), *The Laramie Project* (Duke Ellington School of the Arts) and many more. Cresent is also a freelance Live Audio Engineer and Visual Artist. She has aspirations to design on Broadway and continue touring with various performing artists as their Audio Engineer, all while continuing to fill spaces with her original exhibits. **Website:** www.linktr.ee/cresentrochelle

HAROLD STEWARD ASSISTANT DIRECTOR | DRAMATURG

is a dynamic arts leader, educator, and strategist from Dallas, TX. Currently serving as the Executive Director of the New England Foundation for the Arts (since July 2023), he oversees strategic vision, governance, and organizational excellence for this prominent arts funder. Prior to this role, he was the Executive Director and Cultural Strategist at The Theatre Offensive in Boston and the Manager of the South Dallas Cultural Center. He is also the former Artistic Director of Fahari Arts Institute, a multidisciplinary, Black queer arts organization dedicated to supporting LGBTQ artists of color from the African Diaspora. He has facilitated workshops for Equity Quotient and served as faculty for Harvard's Arts & Cultural Organization Management (ACOM) program at the American Repertory Theater, as well as an affiliate faculty member at Emerson College. Steward's recent directing credits include *As You Like It* (Actor Shakespeare Project) and *The I.D. Monologues* (The Theater Offensive). His other notable works include the award-winning multimedia adaptation of *The Bull Jean Stories* by Sharon Bridgeforth, performed by Q-Roc Ragsdale at the South Dallas Cultural Center, and *Freckle in My Eye*, written and performed by Ashley Wilkerson at the same venue. Currently, he is working on two books: *Can I See, That Banjee Stage: Queer Trap Cultural Perspectives & Theatrical Possibilities* and *In Culture We Trust: Art as Applied Social Science*.

MADDIE MCDONALD PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

is a UNT alumni who has recently earned her BA in Theatre Design/Tech, and most recently worked on the Stage West/Dallas Theater Center production of *Primary Trust*. At UNT Maddie previously managed *The Donner Party* this past spring and most recently managed *Bus Stop* as her final fall show. While in theatre Maddie earned the Schneider Award for Technical Excellence and Spotlight Student Award at Blinn College. Her plans for the future are to jump into the theatre industry as a stage manager and she's extremely excited to learn from the Stage West Design Apprenticeship Program.

MEET THE ARTISTS

DJORÉ NANCE MUSIC CONSULTANT | CO-DRAMATURG

is a multi-faceted artist who is recognized for his work as a singer, actor, composer, musician, and writer. Most recently, Djoré was seen at Jazz at Lincoln Center as a featured vocalist for the Max Roach Centennial Concert and Off-Broadway in *A Beautiful Lady at LaMaMa ETC.* On screen Djoré can be seen starring in episodes of HBO's *Random Acts of Flyness*. He has performed as a Bass-Baritone soloist at Carnegie Hall, Avery Fischer Hall, and New York City Opera. Djoré is a graduate of The Juilliard School and is a member of Actors' Equity.

ASHLEY OLIVER PRODUCTION MANAGER

is an Actor and Production/Stage Manager from Arlington, TX. She holds a BA in Drama from Prairie View A&M University and has worked in theaters around the DFW metroplex for over 20 years. She made her directorial debut with *Aint No Mo* (Soul Rep Theatre Company) and worked on such shows as *Our Town*, *Cake Ladies*, *Ann*, *Fetch Clay Make Man* (Dallas Theater Center) *Travisville*, *Hurt Village*, *Dot*, *Do No Harm* (Soul Rep Theatre), *Marie Antoinette* (Amphibian Stage) *Bootycandy*, *Mr. Burns Post-Electric Play*, *Deer* (Stage West), *Shakin the Mess Outta Misery*, *Flight*, *Once on this Island* (Jubilee Theater) and Erykah Badu's *One (Hu)man show* (TBAAL) and many more.

ANDREW J. BROWN DIRECTOR OF PRODUCTION

is in his sixth season with Dallas Theater Center, and fourth leading DTC's Production department. He served as Production Manager on shows including Public Works Dallas' 2022 production of *The Odyssey*, *The Sound Of Music*, *Our Town/Nuestro Pueblo*, *Working*, and *Tiny Beautiful Things*, as well as the world premiere productions of *The Supreme Leader* and *Cake Ladies*. Previously, Andrew worked with Lyric Theatre of Oklahoma (Oklahoma City, OK), Huntington Theatre Company (Boston, MA), and the Cape Playhouse (Cape Cod, MA). He holds an MFA and an Arts Administration Certificate from Boston University and a BFA from the University of Oklahoma.

JONATHAN NORTON INTERIM ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

is the Interim Artistic Director and Resident Playwright at Dallas Theater Center, where his plays *penny candy*, *Cake Ladies*, and *I AM DELIVERED 'T* have made their world premiere. His work has also been produced or developed by Actors Theatre of Louisville, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Black and Latino Playwrights Conference, Jacob's Pillow, LaJolla Playhouse, National New Play Network, National Performance Network, PlayPenn, Primary Stages, Pyramid Theatre, TheatreSquared, and The Joyce. Locally he's worked with African American Repertory Theater, Bishop Arts Theatre Center, Kitchen Dog Theater, Soul Rep Theatre, South Dallas Cultural Center, Theatre Three and Undermain Theatre. Jonathan's play *Mississippi Goddamn* was a Finalist for the Harold and Mimi Steinberg/ATCA New Play Award and won the 2016 M. Elizabeth Osborn Award given by the American Theatre Critics Association. Other awards include: the Artistic Innovations Grant from the Mid-America Art Alliance, South Dallas Cultural Center Diaspora Performing Arts Commission, and the TACA Donna Wilhelm Family New Works Fund. His play *penny candy* is published by Deep Vellum Publishing.

KEVIN MORIARTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

is Executive Director of Dallas Theater Center. From 2007-2022 he served as DTC's Enloe/Rose Artistic Director, during which time DTC opened the Dee & Charles Wyly Theatre at the AT&T Performing Arts Center and won the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theater. Before joining DTC, Kevin served as artistic director of Hangar Theatre in Ithaca, NY; head of the MFA directing program at Brown University; and an associate artist at Trinity Rep Company. Kevin has directed plays, musicals, and operas nationwide. He has served as Chair of the Dallas Arts District; President of Theatre Communications Group; Vice-President of National Alliance for Musical Theatre. Kevin was a recipient of a Drama League directing fellowship and is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin.

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a cornerstone of Fort Worth's cultural landscape since 1979, serves the community with provocative and inspiring theatrical productions. Producing six mainstage shows annually, the company has earned recognition as Fort Worth Weekly's 2024 Best Theater Troupe and Best Theater Production. Stage West enriches the community through youth and adult theatre education, including the free Festival of the Kid program, which brings young playwrights' works to life. Located in the Near Southside at 821 West Vickery Boulevard, Stage West offers full accessibility including wheelchair access, ASL performances, and assisted listening devices.

STAY LATE

for a conversation with the artists. After each performance, we invite audiences to stay late for a 15-minute conversation with the cast and artists from the show. *Fat Ham Stay Late* will be lead by Zachary J. Willis.

WHAT IS FAT HAM, YOU ASK?

Interim Artistic Director Jonathan Norton interviews *Fat Ham* director vickie washington, who spills the T on all the juicy details of this Pulitzer Prize winner!



JONATHAN

vickie, let's just jump right in. Tell me what *Fat Ham* is about?

vickie

Fat Ham by James Ijames is a Pulitzer Prize winning play that takes place in the backyard of a family in North Carolina. The protagonist is Juicy. Many people say it is a retelling of *Hamlet*, but I like to look at it as a riff on *Hamlet*. That's how Ijames himself has described it. It's a riff, a take-off of *Hamlet* and tells the story of Juicy, this kid who's trying to figure it out and deal with his black queer identity, and he just wants to get a job in human resources, and they're having a backyard barbecue in the South.

JONATHAN

How would you describe the ways in which the play aligns with *Hamlet* and the ways that it departs?

vickie

Ijames uses some of the text, but he puts it in different people's mouths and sometimes changes the context. So, for instance, the wonderful "*what a piece of work is man.*" You will hear it, but it will be slightly different context, to say the least. And the characters, in addition to Juicy - there's Larry, the Laertes character, there's Tedra the Gertrude character - as examples. So, there's those ways in which he has kept the *Hamlet* story and used it as a jumping off point for this wonderful story about this black family in the backyard barbecue.

JONATHAN

Why do you think it's important that James Ijames made Juicy, the *Hamlet* character, a queer black man?

vickie

Oh, I think it's very important. In my research, what I found with Ijames is that he wanted to have someone that he could, obviously, relate to - and many people who are blessed to be born black and queer can relate to. There's a wonderful conflict there with a family, some of whom embrace who Juicy is and some of whom don't. So, these are ways in which Juicy's queerness really helps to spur the action and to spur the tension of the story. Does Juicy want to continue this cycle of violence and ugliness, or does he want to embrace something that is more affirming to who he is? We get to journey with him to embracing that and, in fact, bringing everybody in the family and us along with him.

JONATHAN

And James Ijames' version of *Hamlet* is not a tragedy.

vickie

Oh, my goodness, no, it's so funny and it's not a tragedy. That's just what I was saying in terms of deciding not to embrace the tragic aspect of Juicy's life. In the beginning, at the very top of the play, when Tio talks to Juicy and says, "oh you need to work through some of that," and we get to see him working through that and because they're in the backyard, and because it's a southern black family, and because this boy's daddy has been killed or been ordered to be killed by his uncle, and his mama just married the uncle. All this dysfunction is on display and it's a barbecue, so it's very funny. It's not tragic. It's very, very juicy. Very juicy and delicious...and delectable.

JONATHAN

What do you hope audiences take away from the play?

vickie

What I hope that audiences will take away from *Fat Ham* and what I know that audiences will take away from *Fat Ham* is the beauty of - the messiness of - the joy of - the drama of - the comedy of - the gut bucket laughter that this play will bring. It's funny. It's juicy. All the things that are good about humanity are on display, even when you see some of the not so good. The way in which Ijames gets us on this journey and takes us, along with Juicy to a place of affirmation, a place of self-discovery, a place of self-determination, a place of reveling in and rejoicing in family and love and blackness and queerness and self-identity. Those are the things that you will take away from *Fat Ham*.

JONATHAN

What does it mean to you to see *Fat Ham* live on stage at this theater - the Kalita Humphreys?

vickie

Wow! My first professional theater production to see was at the Kalita in the basement. There was a company, The Janus Players, which was started, established and founded by Reginald Montgomery, who was the first black company member of the Dallas Theater Center Company under Paul Baker, and he directed and performed in a production of Jean Genet's *The Blacks*. And so, I feel as though it's full circle. I have performed on this stage, but I've not directed. This is my first time to direct for this here, and so I'm excited about it. And what it means is that the work continues. There's a continuum as it relates to the black experience being a part of a worldwide...a universal theater experience. So, for me, it is an opportunity and a blessing to be a part of bringing that to Dallas, to this theater, with this group of fabulous folk, with this fabulous story crafted by James Ijames.



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DTC's 2025–26 season is dedicated to the memory of William Allen ("Bill") Custard.

Bill passed away in March 2025 after a lifetime of extraordinary philanthropy and devoted service to Dallas Theater Center. A Life Trustee and twice Board Chair, Bill and his beloved wife, Linda, shared a profound and enduring bond with DTC—one of their earliest dates was attending the opening night of the Kalita Humphreys Theater in 1959, beginning more than six decades of generosity and leadership.

In both good times and hard times, Bill listened with care, navigated challenges with wisdom and grace, and offered counsel with strength, warmth, and humor. DTC's highest honor, the Linda and Bill Custard Award, is bestowed each year upon someone whose impact has left an indelible mark on our theater's history. All of us at DTC who follow in his footsteps strive to live up to his remarkable example. As Shakespeare wrote, "He was a man, take him for all in all, I shall not look upon his like again."



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