

## CAST AND CHARACTERS

BETTY .....MILDRED MARIE LANGFORD\*  
HIGH PRIESTESS.... SHA'LEAH NIKOLE STUBBLEFIELD\*  
ALVIS ..... DEREK JACKSON  
GEORGE .....DONATHAN WALTERS

BASS ..... GARRETT LOFGREN  
VIOLIN ..... ANNA MAT  
BANJO ..... ANN POLEDNAK

BETTY ALTERNATE: SIMONE MOORE\*  
GEORGE ALTERNATE: JAMIL SMITH

\* Member of Actors' Equity Association,  
The Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.



### Setting:

## The Hereafter

*This performance will run without an intermission.*

The *American Saga* series was founded with the mission of bringing relevant theatre to underserved communities in South Los Angeles. It aims to promote social change and healing in communities in South Los Angeles.

This piece, *Gunshot Medley: Part 1* is the inaugural piece in the *American Saga* series. Collaborative Artists Bloc seeks to tell the stories of American history that are often ignored, misrepresented, or simply left in the shadows. The history of the United States of America is long, intricate, and incredibly diverse. The foundation of this country has affected many voices, and a lot of those voices are marginalized. It is our intent to tell the untold or rarely heard stories of this nation. It is our responsibility to give voice to those who are not able to speak for themselves. It is our responsibility, and our honor, to share the ongoing dialogue, gifts, and ramifications of the American Saga.

### PRODUCTION STAFF

Dramaturg ..... Ariane Helou  
Outreach Coordinator ..... Lysa Myles  
Key Art Design ..... Cristian Kreckler  
Rogue Machine Production Manager... Amanda Bierbauer  
Rogue Machine Technical Director.....David Mauer

## FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT

This play is for the real life Betty, Alvis, and George, the trinity who never had a chance to see freedom. This is for Senator Pickney. For Trayvon. For Tamir. For Sandra. For Eric.

This is for all of the names that we didn't see flash before our television screens or on our Facebook newsfeeds. This is for you, dear brothers and sisters, may the ancestors keep you and guide you home.

— Dionna

### DRAMATURG'S NOTES ON THE PLAY:

Three gravestones in a North Carolina cemetery bear the following inscriptions:

BETTY May 2, 1860  
ALVIS April 2, 1860  
GEORGE November 26, 1850

No birth dates, no last names; not a blank page in a history book so much as a margin, taken for granted and ignored. Dionna Michelle Daniel's *Gunshot Medley* imagines a narrative for those whom history has shut out. At the same time, the play invites these characters to live with us in our time, not merely bearing witness to the intervening centuries, but experiencing both progress and injustice along the way. The world of *Gunshot Medley*—"the Hereafter"—is a transitory, liminal space, a meeting ground for past and present, death and life, magical and real. Daniel's play enacts an intimate connection to an ancestral past, energized by George, Alvis, and Betty and embodied in the High Priestess.

Although the American institution of slavery did its utmost to sever connections to the religions, languages, and cultural practices of those brought across the Middle Passage, traces extend into the present. The High Priestess represents one such trace; she is a New World echo of Oya, the Yoruba deity of winds, storms, and the eternal cycle of death and rebirth. At the same time, *Gunshot Medley* considers the traumas of ancestral memory. The play is a meditation on the violence of memory: the tension between the necessity of remembering, of memorializing, and the pain caused by revisiting the site of trauma. In the multiple lives of George and Alvis, we see an enactment of intergenerational trauma and the strain that decades of extreme stress can inflict upon communities. With each return to the living world, Alvis and George carry what they have already witnessed and survived, until the burden becomes unbearable.

Yet *Gunshot Medley* is an act of remembrance that doesn't shrink from the sites of trauma; it puts them before our eyes and in our ears, taking ownership of the narrative. Dionna Michelle Daniel gives imaginative life to Betty, Alvis, and George, and uses music to infuse the unremitting landscape with moments of joy. The story takes on new life, literally, as the men take on new lives over the centuries, and find new melodies, words, and movements to express themselves. As Alvis says to Betty, every song "becomes my story when I sing it."

— Ariane Helou, Dramaturg



#RMT12

@American Saga