

DEFYING EXPECTATIONS
UNCG THEATRE
2024-2025



SCHOOL, or, THE AFRICAN MEAN GIRLS PLAY GIRLS; BY: JOCELYN BIOH



"Comedy with a punch."
-Observer



"Delivers nonstop belly laughs."
-Chicago Times



"Heartwarming and hilarious."
-Hollywood Reporter

UNCG School of Theatre

presents

School Girls; or, The African Mean Girls Play

by Jocelyn Bioh

Directed By: **Mya Brown**^▲▲**

Scene Designer
Randy McMullen*

Dialect Coaches
Amani Dorn**
Natalie Blackman

Lighting Designer Costume Designer Sound Designer
Ryn Waid **Frenchie La'Verne** **David Greenberg**

Hair & Makeup Designer Stage Manager
Jayde Grant **Tala Terrell^**

The UNCG School of Theatre is an accredited member of the National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST).

World Premiere at the MCC Theater, October 16, 2017
(Robert LuPone, Bernard Telsey, & William Cantler, Artistic Directors;
Blake West, Executive Director)

Originally developed as part of The New Black Fest at The Lark, 2016
Additional development as part of the MCC Theater PlayLabs series, 2016

"The Greatest Love Of All" By Linda Creed and Michael Masser
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"SCHOOL GIRLS; OR, THE AFRICAN MEAN GIRLS PLAY is presented by special arrangement with Broadway Licensing, LLC, servicing the Dramatists Play Service collection. (www.dramatists.com)"

Any video and/or audio recording of this production is strictly prohibited.

CAST

Paulina..... **Symoné Spencer**
Ericka..... **Maya McCall**
Nana..... **Cinnamon Stoner^A**
Ama..... **Janaal Opiyo**
Eloise..... **Courtney McKinney**
Headmistress..... **Jakyia Barnes**
Mercy..... **Seania Burnett**
Gifty..... **Alexa Fields**
Ghanaian TV Announcer/American TV Host..... **Minnie Jones^A**
American TV Host..... **Scooter Johnson**

UNDERSTUDIES

Headmistress..... **Minnie Jones^A**
Gifty..... **Scooter Johnson**



*United Scenic Artists affiliation

**Member of Actors' Equity Association

***Member of American Federation of Musicians

^AMember of Alpha Psi Omega

^{AA}Member of Screen Actors Guild

^{AAA}Society of Directors and Choreographers

~International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees

LEARN MORE

To view bios and headshots please visit:

HEADSHOTS & BIOS

or visit www.uncgtheatre.com and click on the link for “Bios and Headshots” in the “*School Girls; or, The African Mean Girls Play*” section of the page.

Run time:

Approximately 85 minutes with no intermission

Age Rating: PG-13

Content Note: This performance includes subject matter that may be challenging or upsetting for some audiences. The play addresses themes such as colorism, body-shaming, disordered eating, harmful beauty practices, racism, and abusive language.

Setting:

Aburi Girls’ boarding school – located in the Aburi mountains in central Ghana. The year is 1986.

FRAME/WORKS

Please join us for a *School Girls; or, The African Mean Girls Play* Frame/Works discussion on Nov. 25 at 7:00 p.m. To attend in person, please visit room 130 in the Moore Nursing Building located at 318 McIver St.. in person or via Teams. Frame/Works is intended to share the contextual underpinnings of our theatrical productions – the how, the who, the what, the when and the why. Frame/Works brings to light the important conversations that are often had before, during, and after a piece of theatre is created and shared. Team meeting information will be shared with ticket buyers.

PRODUCTION SUPPORT

Music Coach.....	Kevin Lawson
Documentarians.....	Kareem Callaway, Jaden Rogers
Dramaturgs.....	Sean Burchette, Jay Smith, Candace Lilford
Assistant Stage Managers.....	Clem Creighton, Raegan Amos
Assistant Scene Designer.....	Eva Bible
Technical Director.....	Tom McCoy
Carpenters.....	Ryn Waid, Mickey Oliver, Jaquan Cooper, Ashlyn Hart, THR 140L Students
Prop Director.....	Eva Bible
Paint & Prop Artisans.....	Cara Parks, THR 140L Students
Paint and Prop Overhire.....	Eden Clementine
Assistant Lighting Designer.....	Eryn O'Brien
Head Electrician.....	Mickey Oliver
Assistant Head Electrician.....	Kai Hamby
Electricians.....	Kat Jones, THR 146 & THR 370 Students
Assistant Costume Designer.....	Robin Davis
Wardrobe Supervisor.....	Quinn Gilbert
Costume Artisans.....	THR 492 and THR 244 Students
Hair & Makeup Artisans.....	Courtney McKinney, Jordan Ramsey
Stage Crew.....	THR 146L Students
Wardrobe Crew.....	THR 147L Students

FACULTY/STAFF PRODUCTION SUPPORT

Director of Production.....**Chip Haas~**
Theatre Manager.....**Joshua Ritter**
Dramaturgy Advisor.....**Anna Dulba-Barnett**
Scene Design Supervisor.....**Randall McMullen***
Technical Direction Supervisor.....**Tom McCoy**
Scenery & Prop Studio Supervisor.....**Tannis Boyajian**
Lighting Supervisor.....**Joyce Liao**
Sound Supervisor.....**David Greenberg**
Hair & Makeup Supervisor.....**Jehann Gilman~**
Costume Design Supervisor.....**Clare Parker**
Costume Technology Supervisor.....**Tara Webb**
Costume Director.....**Amy Holroyd**
CVPA Box Office Manager.....**Abigail Harris**
Graphic Design.....**Mike Lawson**

STUDENT THEATRE MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

Audience Services Managers.....**August Dence, Keiana Crews**
Marketing & Public Relations Dir.....**Brooklynn Levonas**
Community Engagement Dir.....**Candace Lilford,**
Community Engagement Mgmt.....**Seania Burnett,**
De'Asia McRae[▲]
Social Media Managers.....**Katherine Gerondelis,**
Julia Freeman
Box Office Managers.....**Joey Urgino, Keagan Cook,**
August Dence, Alexa Fields, Maya Diaz,
Keiana Crews, India Nykamp
Box Office Staff.....**Riley Sharp, Calla Boerger, Whit Jury**
Theatre Management Practicum.....**THR 493 Students**

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Welcome to *School Girls; Or, The African Mean Girls Play*. Jocelyn Bioh has crafted a story that is funny, fierce, and unflinchingly honest. Set in a Ghanaian boarding school in the 1980s, this play delves into the deeply embedded issue of colorism, centering on Paulina, a dark-skinned, talented, and popular student who dreams of representing her country in the Miss Ghana pageant. Her confidence and standing, however, are shaken by the arrival of Ericka, a new student whose light skin and long hair align with the Eurocentric beauty standards favored by the pageant recruiter. This struggle for acceptance is echoed in a subplot involving Nana, Ama, Mercy, and Gifty, the other members of Paulina's established crew, each of whom grapples with her own insecurities and self-image in unique ways.

As the director, I am inspired by how Bioh masterfully weaves humor and gravity together, using the familiar dynamics of high school drama to reveal the complex, painful layers of colorism, colonial beauty standards, and the quest for self-worth. The story shows the tender and turbulent journey of growing up—of grappling not only with peers but with societal forces that attempt to define who we are.

With this production, I hope audiences are prompted to reflect on their own ideas of beauty and belonging while celebrating the strength, vulnerability, and complexity of these young women. Bioh's characters remind us that the struggle for self-acceptance transcends culture and geography and that, ultimately, beauty can and should be redefined on our own terms. In this moment in history, it is more important than ever for women to unite in their pursuit of collective liberation for the betterment of our shared global future.

Thank you for joining us on this journey, and I hope you enjoy the show!

-Mya Brown

COLLEGE OF VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Dean.....**bruce d. mcclung**

SCHOOL OF THEATRE FACULTY AND STAFF

Director.....**Natalie Sowell**

Janet Allard
Dominick Amendum
Robi Arce-Martínez
Natalie Blackman
Tannis Boyajian
Rachel Briley
Mya Brown
Julie Devore
Anna Dulba-Barnett
Andrew Eisenman
Christina Elkins
Dana Fear
Michael Flannery
Jehann Gilman
David Greenberg
Chip Haas
Brandon Hicks
April Hill
Amy Holroyd

Hugh Hysell
April Hill
Amy Holroyd
Hugh Hysell
Joyce Liao
Thomas McCoy
Randall McMullen
Clare Parker
Joshua Purvis
Joshua Ritter
Meris Robinson
Enruque Rosario-Ruiz
David Sebren
Aaron Sparks
Michael Tourek
Abigail Van Patter
Tug Watson
Tara Webb
Ashley White



The Kennedy Center

The Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival, part of the Rubenstein Arts Access Program, is generously funded by David M. Rubenstein.

Special thanks to The Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust for supporting the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts' Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival.

Additional support is provided by The Honorable Stuart Bernstein and Wilma E. Bernstein; and the Dr. Gerald and Paula McNichols Foundation.

Kennedy Center education and related artistic programming is made possible through the generosity of the National Committee for the Performing Arts.

This production is entered in the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival (KCACTF). The aims of this national theater education program are to identify and promote quality in college-level theater production. To this end, each production entered is eligible for a response by a regional KCACTF representative, and selected students and faculty are invited to participate in KCACTF programs involving scholarships, internships, grants and awards for actors, directors, dramaturgs, playwrights, designers, stage managers and critics at both the regional and national levels.

Productions entered on the Participating level are eligible for invitation to the KCACTF regional festival and may also be considered for national awards recognizing outstanding achievement in production, design, direction and performance.

Last year more than 1,500 productions were entered in the KCACTF involving more than 200,000 students nationwide. By entering this production, our theater department is sharing in the KCACTF goals to recognize, reward, and celebrate the exemplary work produced in college and university theaters across the nation.

Theatre Angels, Seat Campaign, & Scholarship Donors 2023-2024

Updated: 10/26/2023
(New Donor List Coming Soon!)

Ms. Nicole Lynn Aquilina, Ms. Caitlyn Marie Baldwin,
Dr. Kate R. Barrett, Mr. William S. Barrier,
Mrs. April Bunn Barry, Mr. Peter Bergstrom,
Mrs. Liz Boardman, Mrs. Lisa S. Bohn,
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Ms. Jean K. Pope, Mr. Joshua T. Purvis,
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Mr. Winston Sims, Ms. Natalie D. Sowell, Mr. David Sprinkle,
Ms. Jennifer M. Szescula, Ms. Patti Walker,
Mr. Jonathan Arthur Wentz, Mrs. Georgia Nicolas West,
Ms. Heather M. Wingate, Ms. Carol Wright,
Mrs. Sharon Marshall Ying

Should you wish to become a Theatre Angel, donate to the Seat Campaign, or donate to a School of Theatre scholarship, please call the UNCG Theatre Box Office from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday at 336-334-4392. For questions about the Theatre Angels membership program, please email Theatre Manager, Josh Ritter, at jsritter@uncg.edu.

Angels/Donor information is updated once at the beginning of each season. This usually happens in September.

General School of Theatre Policies

- There is a fee for exchanges unless patrons are current Member Angels or higher, a School of Theatre faculty member, or an undergraduate or graduate theatre major or minor.
- We only accept cash, checks, Visa, and Mastercard as forms of payment.
- We do not offer ticket refunds per CVPA policy except in rare extenuating circumstances.
- Late seating is at the discretion of House Management and may not be immediately available. Late patrons will be seated in the closest available seat for their safety.
- Patrons who arrive more than 30 min. late must wait until intermission to be seated. If the production does not have an intermission, they will not be admitted.
- The use of photographic, video, or audio recording devices of any kind is strictly prohibited during our productions. If a guest is found to be recording the performance or taking pictures during a production, ushers or the house manager will ask them to delete the content and stop immediately. If the guest does not comply, they will be asked to leave.
- Food and drink are not permitted in School of Theatre venues.
- Only service animals are permitted in School of Theatre venues. All other animals are not allowed to enter during performances.
- All guests must have a ticket for entry.
- Babies (0-12 months) are only permitted at North Carolina Theatre for Young People productions.
- We share some guidance with the public, but it is the sole responsibility of parents or guardians to research and judge if the content of a performance is appropriate for their child's age and level of maturity.
- Please take a moment to locate the nearest emergency exit closest to your seating area. In the unlikely event of an emergency, please remain calm, and follow the instructions from the ushers (dressed in white and black with a name tag) and the house manager (dressed in all black with a name tag).

ANTI-RACIST/BIAS STATEMENT

The School of Theatre acknowledges the mistakes we have made dealing with systemic racism, bias, and prejudice, much like the rest of America. We wholeheartedly believe in the following words of Ibram X. Kendi: "The opposite of racist isn't 'not racist.' It is anti-racist." To the School of Theatre, this means that we will educate our faculty, staff, and students about anti-racist practices. This looks like creating systemic change through workshops, continuing education, and professional development centered around anti-racist practices, theatrical intimacy, and bettering ourselves in service of our diverse and intersectional student body. This feels like educating and empowering our students, faculty, and staff to recognize and speak out against racism and damaging, outdated theatre practices. We are committed to this daily practice of unlearning, growth, and change.

JOIN US FOR OUR UPCOMING PRODUCTIONS!

BFA First-Year Showcase

Dates:

Dec. 6 at 7:30 p.m.

Dec. 7 at 7:30 p.m.

UNCG Theatre Box Office Info:

Phone: 336-334-4392

Hours: 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.,
Monday through Friday

Online Tickets:

www.uncgtheatre.com