

Portland Center Stage at  
**THE ARMORY**

**REDWOOD**

Written by Brittany K. Allen

Directed Chip Miller

**October 26 – November 17, 2019**

**On the U.S. Bank Main Stage**

Artistic Director | Marissa Wolf

Managing Director | Cynthia Fuhrman

# **REDWOOD**

Written by Brittany K. Allen

Directed Chip Miller

Choreographer

**Darrell Grand  
Moultrie**

Scenic Designer

**Brittany Vasta**

Costume Designer

**Alison Heryer**

Lighting Designer

**Jeanette Oi-Suk Yew**

Sound Designer

**Phil Johnson**

Dramaturg

**Benjamin Fainstein**

Stage Manager

**Jamie Lynne Simons\***

Associate

Choreographer  
**Gabriella Pérez\***

Production Assistant

**Dana Petersen**

*Redwood* was developed, in part, at the Lark Play Development Center, Kansas City Repertory Theatre, Manhattan Theatre Club, and Ensemble Studio Theatre.

The video or audio recording of this performance by any means is strictly prohibited.

**If you photograph the set before or after the performance, please credit the designers if you share the image.**

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

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**THE CAST** (in alphabetical order)

Brittany K. Allen*	.....	Meg Wilson
Orion Bradshaw*	.....	Tatum
Nick Ferrucci*	.....	Drew Tatum
Charles Grant	.....	Instructor
Tyrone Mitchell Henderson*	.....	Steve Durbin
Jennifer Lanier*	.....	Beverly Wilson
Ashley Mellinger	.....	Harriet, Hattie
Andrea Vernae*	.....	Allie, Alameda

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

## **FROM ARTISTIC DIRECTOR MARISSA WOLF**

Welcome to the world premiere production of *Redwood* and our new holiday offering, *Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley*. These two plays, back to back on the main stage, lift up central characters who are unafraid to take up space. *Redwood's* Meg, a teacher preparing to speak on behalf of her union to the Maryland State Senate, unapologetically wrestles with new knowledge of her enslaved ancestors that she carries with her. Mary in *Miss Bennet* steps out from the shadow of her sisters and lives fully as a virtuosic pianist and a voracious reader who yearns to have adventures far from home.

Even within the context of two wildly different plays, both of these women — Meg and Mary — insist on being seen. Here, love is possible only if the complexities of their desires and sorrows are fully acknowledged by their lovers.

Across two centuries, and a continent apart, the plays each bring feminism and humor to our current reckoning with pressing issues of our time. Brittany K. Allen's *Redwood* calls forward an America that understands the present moment through the urgent lens of our collective, bloody history of slavery. In *Miss Bennet*, Lauren Gunderson and Margot Melcon deliver a distinctly contemporary take on a British classic, offering strong women at the center of a playful holiday show.

A shoutout to Chip Miller, our new associate producer, who makes his Portland directing debut with *Redwood*. Chip's vision for what is possible

in the American theater is thrilling, and I'm grateful to have his chutzpah and boundless imagination on our team. *Miss Bennet* marks my directing debut at PCS as well! After commissioning and producing some of Gunderson's hilarious and rich early work with Crowded Fire Theater in San Francisco, directing this delicious play feels like coming home.

We are so happy to share this holiday season with you. Thank you for joining us to celebrate these fantastic voices on stage. Enjoy the show!

All the best,  
Marisa Wolf

## **Our Tangled Roots: An interview with *Redwood* playwright and performer Brittany K. Allen**

By Claudie Jean Fisher, Associate Director of Marketing & Communications

In *Redwood*, Brittany K. Allen uses her signature playfulness, verve, and bold theatricality to scale the branches of our shared American lineage. Here, she digs into the genesis of her new play — our 28<sup>th</sup> world premiere to date and the very first selected by Artistic Director Marissa Wolf.

**Why were you initially drawn to exploring a family's excavation of their ancestry and, in particular, how that might impact an interracial couple?**

*Redwood* actually has two prongs of autobiographical inspiration. A few years back, one of my amazing (and for what it's worth, utterly un-Stevie-like) aunts became interested in charting our family's genealogy. As Stevie says in the play, there's a lot of freight to this exercise for Black Americans, because for many of us, mining our histories isn't this joyfully curious, what-famous-president-am-I-related-to kind of hobby/mission, but one that's necessarily going to lead you back to chattel slavery and plantation rape (that is, if you can find your relatives at all). But I admired, and continue to admire, that impulse to situate oneself in the fabric of this country's history by charting the family, finding the names, really attempting to imagine who those ancestors were. So that mission, and some of the alarming particulars my aunt turned up, inspired Stevie's quest in this play.

Around the same time all this was happening, I was in an interracial relationship and was learning how to speak about micro and macroaggressions in this highly intimate way, with a person who was

theoretically supposed to understand everything about me. And this work, I found, was very difficult. As a person who's grown up in a majority white community as a sort-of perpetual "Only" in the room, I feel like I've had to become versed in the many subtle ways you have to navigate white spaces in a brown body — the ways you defend yourself, or work to make people more at ease, or attempt to name your pain when there's a pronounced power dynamic in the room. But the way one is with a partner is a lot different than how one is with a friend, or a colleague, or even a family member of a different race. I got into a lot of frustrating, mind-opening conversations while I was learning how to sit in a love that tested my politics and, occasionally, my concept of selfhood. And some of those conversations — and others I've had since, in other relationships — inspired the Meg and Drew characters, who are also learning how to do this thorny work of recognizing the other in a world that will never see them on equal footing.

**One of the powerful things about this play is that it grapples with slavery and racism through both a present-day and historical lens, concurrently, and we get to see how characters across generations — of different races, ages, stages of life, even religious beliefs — are affected. How did you approach fleshing out each of the members of this family tree? What was important to you as you thought about the different personalities and perspectives you wanted to bring to life on stage?**

I love this question! Yes, a major goal of the play is to acknowledge the hugeness of any family's tree and show how we are all of us in America tangled up in one another. And at the play's end — spoiler alert — I enlisted the chorus as Meg and Drew's intertwined ancestors because I wanted to show in a brief burst how diverse these stories are once you really go digging. *Everyone* in America, I'll assert, was affected by slavery.

And I wanted to show a gamut of those uniquely affected lives, from Hattie to Tatum to Napoleon to the matriarch Alameda.

Perspective and personality-wise, a running theme of the play for me is the conflict between those Black folks like Mom, or perhaps Instructor, who find more solace in facing forward than looking back, and are perhaps not as compelled by the genealogy project as Stevie or Meg. A lot of my peers of color can't understand that position, but it's a way of being that resonates with a lot of elders on both sides of my family, and I wanted to honor that as I was attempting to articulate how a varied group of Black people consider their position in present-day America. Similarly, I included a glimpse of Harriet and Tatum as Drew's parents, because I wanted to show a completely different kind of interracial relationship, with an entirely different coping language and shorthand.

**At two moments in the script, Meg and her boyfriend Drew share a similar sentiment: "I'm not naïve — I know about American history." What is the significance of this line, and why was it important to put it in both of these character's mouths?**

This line is important to me because I wanted to communicate — with a minimum of cheek — that Meg and Drew are intelligent, thoughtful, urban millennials. For lack of a better word, they're "woke." They've been to the Decolonize-Your-Mind workshops, they both attend anti-police brutality rallies, and they have a language, already, that helps them metabolize the historical irony of their situation. Because I've already seen the plays and stories in which we leave feeling that the interracial love story is doomed, I wanted to write the version where we *do* trust that these two have initial chemistry and fondness and respect for the other; they could actually be MFEO [made for each other]. But I situated the play very deliberately at the moment when even the best defenses — knowledge, humor, love — fail. These two characters know everything



one could ostensibly get from a Zinn book about American history, but they haven't entirely personalized this work, and that's what puts them at risk.

**How did you settle on the title *Redwood*?**

I don't remember when it came to me, exactly! Bolt of inspiration in the night, perhaps? I started calling drafts "Redwood" because I kept coming back to the mammoth nature of the genealogy project, and this idea that once you find one "branch" of a family tree you're promptly lead to 45 other people, stories, and lines. The physical chart itself wouldn't fit on a page. And *sequoia sempervirens* (or redwoods) are some of the oldest and tallest trees in this country, so ...

**Is there anything else you'd like to share with audiences about this beautiful play?**

I hope you enjoy it! And that it inspires difficult but transformative conversations! I hope it invites you to consider, if you haven't, how this macro-political structure might personally affect you. And if you have already thought about all of this a lot, I hope it's an affirming 90 minutes. Also, thank you for coming! I'm honored to be here!

## FROM THE DIRECTOR: CHIP MILLER

When I arrived in Portland in April, I could not have fathomed being welcomed so warmly by this city and this theater community — a community so vibrant and robust, diverse in talent, and bursting with enthusiasm. It's a city with a singular, extravagant identity; a canvas full of possibility, particularly for an artist, and I am so thrilled to be the new associate producer here at The Armory.

As I prepared to move here, knowing I would be directing *Redwood*, I found myself dwelling on questions of identity, particularly how the ways we see ourselves can shift so rapidly in moments of change. Who had I been in my previous life in Kansas City, MO, the place where I grew up, where my family still resides? Which parts of that person would be useful as I relocated to the beautiful Pacific Northwest? Were there pieces of myself that I could let go of when I stepped out of my car and into this next chapter of my life? Were there elements that I should prepare to clutch on to?

Talking about identity — and talking about how to talk about identity — has become a constant concern in the current societal landscape of monetized social media personas, partisan politics, and widening generational divides in how we communicate with each other. How do we digest this rapidly changing world and effectively communicate the ways our identities shift in a barrage of constant noise?

Brittany K. Allen's gorgeous new play, *Redwood*, asks this question (and many more) about how a single piece of information can change our world view and our view of self in an instant. When the play begins, Meg, Drew, Beverly, and Stevie are already experiencing moments of transition

— beginning to try on new versions of themselves, seeing what fits, and what needs to be altered.

It is in this moment of transition that the play asks the characters to investigate their own identities. How much of our identity is something we choose and how much is tied to our genealogy — the traumas and joys of our ancestors being passed along to us through generations? Brittany asks these challenging questions, while maintaining a true sense of joy, surprise, and theatricality. Through its humor (and a fair amount of awesome dancing), *Redwood* has allowed me a space to think about the ever-shifting reality of my own identity. I hope that it can open a similar space for you.

## **MEET THE CAST**

### **Brittany K. Allen, *Playwright, Meg Wilson***

Brittany K. Allen is thrilled to be making her Portland Center Stage at The Armory debut! A New York-based actor and writer, her plays have been developed at Manhattan Theatre Club, The Public Theater, Kansas City Repertory Theatre, and elsewhere. Brittany holds commissions from Playwrights Horizons and Manhattan Theatre Club/Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. She's a member of the emerging writers group at The Public Theater, the Obie Award-winning EST/Youngblood, and was a 2017 Van Lier Playwriting Fellow at the Lark. *Redwood* (Kilroys List, 2017) will be produced in 2020 at The Jungle Theater and Ensemble Studio Theatre. Recent New York performance credits include *Gloria: A Life* (Off-Broadway), *Minor Character* (New Saloon; New York Innovative Theatre Award for Best Ensemble), and workshops with Atlantic Theater Company, Clubbed Thumb, and New York Stage and Film. Brittany

received her B.F.A. from NYU Tisch School of the Arts and studied at the Upright Citizens Brigade Training Center. For the fam!

### **Orion Bradshaw, *Tatum***

Orion is an actor/educator and a proud member of both Actors' Equity and the National Education Association. He recently earned his M.A. in teaching from Southern Oregon University. Orion was an actor for three seasons at Oregon Shakespeare Festival, before going on to co-found Portland's own Post5 Theatre and perform with many Portland and Seattle area theaters. He's also been an educator for such companies as the aforementioned OSF, Portland Center Stage at The Armory, Seattle Repertory Theatre, PlayWrite, Inc., and Northwest Children's Theater and School, among others. Orion wholeheartedly believes that this awesome new show adds a potent point of view to a vital cultural dialogue. He hopes that you find yourself laughing, thinking critically, and participating in the conversation!

### **Nick Ferrucci, *Drew Tatum***

Nick is happy to return to Portland Center Stage at The Armory where his previous credits include *Astoria: Part One and Two*, *Crossing Mnisose*, and *JAW: A Playwrights Festival*. Portland theater credits: *Teenage Dick* at Artists Repertory Theatre, *Arlington*, *John*, *The Angry Brigade* at Third Rail Repertory Theatre, *Luna Gale* at Coho Productions, *Peter and the Starcatcher* at Portland Playhouse, *True West* at Profile Theatre, *A Pigeon & A Boy* at Jewish Theatre Collaborative. Regional: Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Maples Repertory Theatre, Sierra Repertory Theatre, Commonweal Theatre Company, Heritage Theatre Festival, and Bright Star Touring Theatre. Film: *Warmuffin*, *The Falls*, *One Foot in the Gutter*. TV: *Grimm*. He holds an M.F.A. in acting from Northern Illinois University

and a B.F.A. in theater from Southern Oregon University. He has studied with the Moscow Art Theatre in Russia and The Second City in Chicago.

### **Charles Grant, *Instructor***

Charles is overjoyed to be making his Portland Center Stage at The Armory debut with *Redwood!* Maybe you've seen him around town in: *Bootycandy* (Fuse Theatre Ensemble), *Jump* (Confrontation Theatre/Milagro Theatre), *Mamma Mia!* (Broadway Rose Theatre Company), or *A Year with Frog and Toad* (Oregon Children's Theatre), for which he received a Drammy Award for his performance. But maybe you haven't seen him anywhere, and that's cool too. B.F.A. in acting from UC Santa Barbara (Go Gauchos!). He would like to express gratitude and love to Chip, Marissa, the folks at The Armory, the entire cast, creative, and crew of *Redwood*, his friends and family for supporting him, and YOU for being here with us. "I am my ancestors' wildest dreams." [thecharlesgrant.com](http://thecharlesgrant.com)

### **Tyrone Mitchell Henderson, *Steve Durbin***

Tyrone is the founder of Quick Silver Theater Company. Acting credits include the first national tour of *Bring in 'da Noise, Bring in 'da Funk*; Off-Broadway, Tyrone played Friar Francis and the Sexton in the 2019 critically acclaimed Public Theater production of *Much Ado About Nothing*, directed by Tony Award-winner Kenny Leon. Additional Off-Broadway credits include: *King Lear* opposite Billy Porter, *Yellowman*, *Rancho Viejo*, *The Piano Lesson*, *The America Play*, *The Tempest*, *Two Noble Kinsmen*. Regional premieres: *The Magician's Daughter*, *War*, and *Aubergine*. Film: *The Upside*. Television: recurring role on *The Good Fight*. Other television credits include: *Madam Secretary*, *The Code*, *FBI*, *Search Party*, *God Friended Me*,

*Sneaky Pete*, *Orange is the New Black*, and he has guest starred on all three branches of the *Law and Order* series. Stay connected:  
@tymhenderson tyronemitchellhenderson.com

### **Jennifer Lanier, Beverly Wilson**

Jennifer is delighted to bring her work to Portland Center Stage at The Armory. She is currently co-artistic director of Original Practice Shakespeare Festival. Local credits: *Well* and *Let Me Down Easy* at Profile Theatre; *Men on Boats* at Third Rail Repertory Theatre; *The Brother/Sister Plays* at Portland Playhouse; *The Hillsboro Story* at Artists Repertory Theatre. Her solo show *None of the Above* has been seen around the country. Regional: American Stage Theatre Company, Ruth Foreman Theatre, United Stage. Film: *The Water Man*, *Thin Skin*, *Woodstock or Bust*, *Last Champion*, *Scrapper*. TV: *Leverage*, *Grimm*, *Hawaii*. She earned a B.F.A. from University of North Carolina School of the Arts and has studied improvisation with Paul Sills, original director of The Second City.

### **Ashley Mellinger, Harriet, Hattie**

Ashley is pumped for her debut at Portland Center Stage at The Armory! Local credits include *Persephone* with Bedrock Theatre, *The Most Massive Woman Wins* at Deep End Theater, *Dream/Logic* with Hand2Mouth Theatre, and *Sleepwalker* at Headwaters Theatre (Fertile Ground Festival). New York credits include *Volupté* with World Theatre Lab, *Spring's Awakening* and *Balm in Gilead* at The Marilyn Monroe Theatre, and *The Darger Projects* at The Lee Strasberg Theatre & Film Institute. Recent film credits: *Magnificent* (winner of the LGBTQ category at Oregon Independent Film Festival), *Lonesome George*, *irl*, and *Love, Cheryl*. She has a B.F.A. in acting from New York University and has

studied at The Lee Strasberg Theatre & Film Institute and Stonestreet Studios.

### **Andrea Vernae, *Allie, Alameda***

Andrea is so excited and filled with so much gratitude to be making her Portland Center Stage at The Armory debut! Born and raised in Miami, FL, she was last seen in: *The Wolves* at Portland Playhouse; *JUMP*, a co-production with Confrontation Theatre and Milagro Theatre; and *Everybody* at Artists Repertory Theatre, where she is also a resident artist. When not onstage, Andrea enjoys creating short films with Sunflower Creations and being a part of the Confrontation Theatre team.

## **MEET THE CREATIVE TEAM**

### **Chip Miller, *Director***

Chip is a director and producer, currently in the role of associate producer at Portland Center Stage at The Armory. They were previously the artistic associate/resident director at Kansas City Repertory Theatre. Directing: *School Girls; Or, The African Mean Girls Play, Welcome to Fear City, Sex with Strangers, A Raisin in the Sun* (Kansas City Repertory Theatre); *Becoming Martin* by Kevin Willmott (world premiere, The Coterie Theatre); *dwb: driving while black* (Lawrence Arts Center); *4:48 Psychosis* (The Buffalo Room). Chip has developed work with playwrights including Kevin Willmott, Kara Lee Corthron, Brittany K. Allen, Catherine Trieschmann, Darren Canady, Andrew Rosendorf, Michelle T. Johnson, and Michael Finke. They have developed work at The William Inge Theater Festival, NYU Steindhard's New Plays for Young Audiences, Portland Center Stage at The Armory's JAW: A Playwrights

Festival, Midwest Dramatists Center, and Kansas City Repertory Theatre's OriginKC: New Works Festival. Education: B.F.A., NYU Tisch School of the Arts.

### **Darrell Grand Moultrie, *Choreographer***

A recipient of a Princess Grace Choreography Fellowship Award, Darrell's select credits include: *Daddy* (The New Group), *Sugar in Our Wounds* (Manhattan Theatre Club), *Invisible Thread* (Second Stage Theater), *Witness Uganda* (American Repertory Theater), *El Publico* (Teatro Real in Madrid), *Evita* and *Pride and Prejudice* (Kansas City Repertory Theatre). This past summer, his world premiere was performed by The Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater during their engagement at New York's Lincoln Center. Darrell has created multiple works for Colorado Ballet, Cincinnati Ballet, BalletMet, The Sacramento Ballet, Milwaukee Ballet, North Carolina Dance Theatre, Washington Ballet, Smuin Ballet, NBA Ballet in Japan, and has collaborated with Tony Award-winning hooper Savion Glover. Darrell was selected by Grammy Award-winning artist Beyoncé as a choreographer on her "Mrs. Carter Show" World Tour. Darrell is a graduate of Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music & Art & Performing Arts and The Juilliard School.

### **Brittany Vasta, *Scenic Designer***

Brittany is a Brooklyn-based designer for plays, musicals, and operas. Recent work includes: *Octet* and *Rinse, Repeat* (Signature Theatre); *Life Sucks* (Acorn Theater at Theatre Row); Bill Irwin's *Harlequin and Pantalone* (New York City Center); *Happy Birthday, Wanda June* (The Duke on 42<sup>nd</sup> Street), *I thought I would die but I didn't* (The Tank); *Sehnsucht* (JACK); *The Enemy of the People* (Gene Frankel Theatre); *The Road to Damascus* (59E59 Theaters); *Lawnpeople* (Cherry



Lane Theatre); *Welcome to Fear City* (Kansas City Repertory Theatre); *August: Osage County, From the Author of* (Resident Ensemble Players, University of Delaware); *My Name is Asher Lev* (Portland Stage); *Richard III* (The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey). Recent associate design credits: *The Lifespan of a Fact* (Roundabout Theatre Company, Studio 54) and *Fairview* (Soho Rep). Education: M.F.A., New York University. Proud member of United Scenic Artists Local 829.  
brittanyvasta.com

### **Alison Heryer, *Costume Designer***

Alison is a costume designer for live performance, film, and print media. Her design credits include productions at Steppenwolf Theatre, 59E59 Theaters, The New Victory Theater, Gertrude Opera, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Portland Center Stage at The Armory, Portland Opera, Kansas City Repertory Theatre, Indiana Repertory Theatre, ZACH Theatre, Artists Repertory Theatre, The Hypocrites, Redmoon Theater, La MaMa Experimental Theatre Club, and the SXSW Film Festival. She has exhibited work at the Nelson Atkins Museum of Art, the Prague Quadrennial of Design and Space, and World Stage Design Exhibition. Alison is a member of United Scenic Artists Local 829 and the associate professor of costume and textiles in the School of Art + Design at Portland State University.

### **Jeanette Oi-Suk Yew, *Lighting Designer***

Jeanette designs for theater, dance, opera, musicals, music performances, and immersive installation. *The New York Times* described them as “clever” and “inventive.” Recent: *Scotland, PA* (Roundabout Theatre Company); *KPOP* (A.R.T./New York Theatres and the Five Angels Theater at the 52nd Street Project; Hewes Design Award, LIT Design Award; Lortel and Drama Desk nominations); Qui Nguyen’s *Vietgone* at

DCCA Theatre Company (Best Lighting Design nomination); Emily Mann's *Gloria: A Life* with Diana Paulus (Daryl Roth Theatre); Carla Ching's *Nomad Motel* (Atlantic Theater Company); Aziza Barnes' *BLKS* (Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company); Lauren Yee's *Song of Summer* (Trinity Rep); and Eve Ensler's *Fruit Trilogy* (Abington Theatre Company). Upcoming: *Choir Boy* with Jamil Jude (DCCA Theatre Company). NEA/TCG Career Development Program recipient. [jeanetteyew.com](http://jeanetteyew.com)

### **Phil Johnson, *Sound Designer***

Phil is a visual and theatrical artist based in Portland and the host of the podcast Radical Listening (Coho Productions). His recent productions include *Cop Out* and *Hands Up* (August Wilson Red Door Project); *A Doll's House, Part 2*, *Everybody*, *The Humans*, and *An Octoroon* (Artists Repertory Theatre); *Twilight*, *Elliot: A Soldier's Fugue*, *The Antigone Project* (Profile Theatre); *Worse Than Tigers* (A Contemporary Theater/Red Stage); and *Watsonville*, *Lydia*, *Contigo Pan y Cebolla* (Milagro Theatre). Phil Has a B.F.A. and M.A. from Ohio University. If you enjoyed the show please comment @philjohnsonlive or visit [philjohnsondesignstheworld.com](http://philjohnsondesignstheworld.com) for more content and show playlists.

### **Benjamin Fainstein, *Dramaturg***

Benjamin is the literary manager for Portland Center Stage at The Armory and JAW: A Playwrights Festival. Selected dramaturgy and new play development credits include *Howards End* (upcoming, The Armory); Mary Kathryn Nagle's *Crossing Mnisose* (The Armory); Lauren Yee's *Young Americans* (in development, The Armory); *Astoria: Part One and Two* (The Armory); Sarah Sander's *Golden* (MIDD Summer Play Lab); Meghan

Brown's *The Tasters* and Kevin Artigue's *The Forcings* (JAW); Meg Miroshnik's *The Tall Girls* (Carlotta Festival of New Plays); and Marcus Gardley's *The House That Will Not Stand* (Yale Repertory Theatre). Benjamin was a 2018 Lambda Literary Playwriting Fellow, and his plays have been staged in New York, New Haven, Boston, and Washington, D.C. Previous posts include founding artistic director of Whistler in the Dark Theatre, associate artistic director of Yale Cabaret, and managing editor of *Theater* magazine. He received his M.F.A. from Yale School of Drama.

### **Jamie Lynne Simons, *Stage Manager***

Jamie is delighted to return to Portland Center Stage at The Armory. Previously: *Every Brilliant Thing*, JAW: A Playwrights Festival, and other works in development. Most recent credit: *In the Penal Colony* at Portland Opera. Tour: production stage manager for *Hundred Days*, presented by La Jolla Playhouse, The Straz Center, and the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County. Other local credits: Artists Repertory Theatre, Third Rail Repertory Theatre, Portland Playhouse, Profile Theatre, Chamber Music Northwest, and Oregon Health & Sciences University — aiding in the education of medical professionals. Jamie worked for years on cruise ships with Carnival Cruise Lines and was able to visit the birthplace of their great-great-grandfather who immigrated from Denmark. B.F.A., University of the Arts, Philadelphia. Chair of Portland's Liaison Committee for Actors' Equity Association.

### **Dana Petersen, *Production Assistant***

Dana is thrilled to be a stage management apprentice at Portland Center Stage at The Armory. Earlier this season, she was a production assistant for *In the Heights*. Dana earned a B.A in theater from The Ohio State

University where she stage managed *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, *Michael Von Siebenberg Melts Through the Floorboards*, *Four People*, *Execution of Justice*, *Beyond All Recognition*, *7 Ways to Say I Love You*, and *Stupid F\*\*king Bird*. Dana was also a stage management intern on *Much Ado About Nothing* at The Old Globe. Dana sends all of her love to Mom, Dad, Carmen, and Murphy!

**THANKS TO OUR GENEROUS SPONSOR OF *REDWOOD*  
RONNI LACROUTE**

I am committed to supporting new artistic work that addresses important contemporary social issues and hope that *Redwood* will spark many new conversations in its world premiere production at Portland Center Stage at The Armory. It is the duty of art to enlighten our minds and heal our communities.

**BEHIND THE CURTAIN  
MEET THE CHOREOGRAPHER OF *REDWOOD*:  
DARRELL GRAND MOULTRIE**

BY ARTSLANDIA

**You began studying dance after a third grade teacher offered to help pay for your lessons. What do you think she saw in you that prompted such generosity? Will you share more about this extraordinary person with our readers?**

Her name was Gwendolyn McCloud, and she was my third-grade teacher. She would tell me that what she saw was passion. I loved [musical theater] so much, and she saw that I could do it. I loved learning the script, the music, all the dancing. She passed away about four years ago

at 91. She was very passionate herself, and she made sure that I did everything I needed to be successful.

**Having benefitted from a personal arts patron, are you involved in any outreach efforts now as a professional?**

Yeah! I have kids that I have put in dance classes, and I do tons of teaching all around, whenever I can. Different companies have me teach with their outreach programs. I try to make sure I always stay connected in some way to young people.

**You were a dancer before becoming a choreographer. How did this shift develop?**

I was performing on Broadway in *Billy Elliot* in 2009. While I was in the show, I was choreographing at Juilliard during the day and running back to the show at night. There was a lot of double-duty, and something just said to me, if you really want to do this choreography thing, you've got to dive in. With a Broadway show, you could stay forever because it's convenient. You make good money, and in a way, it's safe. I just decided — if you take a step all on faith, the universe will always be there to support you.

**Were you always interested in choreography?**

Always. I've been choreographing since I was a little boy bossing all the other kids around!

**You've been described as one of the most diverse choreographers of our time, with a repertoire that includes theater, ballet, modern, and commercial dance. How have you been able to hop from genre to genre with such spectacular results?**

I was born and raised in the capital of the arts — New York City — so I was exposed to all of it. I was also taught to respect all of it. And I loved

everything! I was at operas and jazz concerts and ballet and modern dance shows. I'm from Harlem so we had to know hip-hop. I think that's it. And as I get older, [the variety] keeps me interested. I'm not doing the same genre all the time, and that keeps me excited and on my toes. It's a lot of fun. It's hard, but it's a lot of fun.

**I can imagine! What advice would you give to aspiring creators hoping to achieve a similarly broad scope of work?**

Go see everything. Talk to people. Ask a lot of questions, and never look down upon anything else. Right now, it's a world where we're all learning about each other, and the main thing is respect. Respect everybody's craft, and if you want to learn it, try to really learn about it instead of just diving in for five seconds.

**What are your hopes for your career that you've yet to achieve?**

Oh man. Some financial freedom! I'm trying to figure out now what to do to be able to share the art but make money. We get taught "don't think about money," but in order to make better art and be better artists, you want to be comfortable. I think now it's about wanting to find comfort financially. But, there's so much I love to do. I love to do Broadway shows. There are tons of other dance companies I love to work with. I'd love to do more plays. So right now, I'm just excited about doing more plays and musicals. It's really exciting for me.

**How did you come to be involved with the world premiere of *Redwood* at Portland Center Stage at The Amory?**

I met Chip [Miller, *Redwood*'s director] and Marissa [Wolf, Portland Center Stage Artistic Director] at Kansas City Rep. I did a production of *Evita* there. They saw my work and really enjoyed it, and we've kept in touch. Marissa did a version of *Pride and Prejudice*, and she brought me back to KCRep for it. And then she wanted to work with me on something

in Portland, but it fell through. Chip wanted to work with me again and had moved to Portland and was directing, so we all connected back at the right time.

**Tell us about your creation process for *Redwood*.**

For me, it's all about the script — learning the script and thinking about what I would want to say in each scene, what actors I have, how they dance. I haven't seen [the actors] yet. I've only seen them all on video, so it'll be interesting to meet them. It's really about going through the script and highlighting every moment that Chip may need me. All the choreographic moments are set moments, but there are also transition moments. I have to have my stuff ready and prepped for Chip so that we can start the collaboration process. We'll be connected at the hip once we start.

**So, you'll have the choreography sort of mapped out, and then ...?**

I always have it sort of mapped out, but I always wait for the vessel — the actor. If I have steps in my head that their body can't do, that's a disservice to the artist. I can usually choreograph very quickly, but it helps me to have the actor in front of me. Then, I can create it on their body so that I can make them look their best without making it too easy for them. I want to challenge them.

**Do you have plans for your downtime when you're in Portland?**

Well, I've been to Portland for Oregon Ballet Theatre twice, so I know some of the dancers. This time I'd love to do some different things while I'm there — maybe go see the mountains. I'm open to any suggestions because every time I've come, I've just stayed in the hotel room. I eat; I work. I eat; I work!

**You'll have to get your hands on the *Artslandia Annual* for some suggestions! Our theme for the season is A Night Out. Will you describe for our readers your perfect night out?**

Oh, my goodness! It's definitely being in New York with friends, going out to eat and have drinks, seeing a show, and then going out to the club to hear good music and do some dancing. We've been doing it since high school!



## **FASCINATING FACTOIDS**

### **DNA & MODERN GENEALOGY**

BY ARTSLANDIA

**1. DNA (DEOXYRIBONUCLEIC ACID) IS THE CHEMICAL BASIS OF HEREDITY AND CONTAINS ALL OF A LIVING ORGANISM'S GENETIC INFORMATION.**

**2. THE STUDY OF FAMILY HISTORIES IS CALLED "GENEALOGY."** Becoming a professional genealogist requires no formal education. Brigham Young University in Utah offers the world's only four-year bachelor's degree available in the field.

**3. THE HUMAN GENOME PROJECT,** an international research effort to uncover the genetic blueprint of a human, advanced biotechnology to sufficiently make at-home genetic testing commonplace. The project formally began on October 1990 and finished in 2003.

**4. IN 2007, U.S. COMPANY 23ANDME WAS THE FIRST TO OFFER EASY AND RELATIVELY AFFORDABLE AT-HOME GENETIC ANALYSIS OF CUSTOMER'S SALIVA.** *Time* magazine declared the service the "Invention of the Year" in 2008. The original price was \$999, but as of fall 2019, the price is \$99.

**5. THERE ARE THREE MAJOR TYPES OF GENEALOGICAL DNA TESTS.**

Autosomal testing examines chromosomes 1–22 and the X chromosome; Y-DNA examines the Y chromosome; and mtDNA examines mitochondria, which is another part of a cell.

**6. WHILE SCIENTISTS AGREE THAT CHIMPANZEES HAVE THE MOST SIMILAR DNA TO HUMANS, THE EXACT PERCENTAGE IS A HOTLY**

**DEBATED FIGURE.** Based on current science, the agreed upon range is from 95 to 99 percent.

**7. IF YOU COULD UNWIND AND STRETCH THE DNA IN A SINGLE CELL INTO A STRAIGHT LINE, IT WOULD BE ABOUT 6 FEET LONG.** The most recent figure for the number of cells in the human body is 37 trillion, so you do the math!

**8. ALL HUMAN BEINGS SHARE 99.9 PERCENT IDENTICAL DNA.** Humans and bananas share 50–60 percent of the same DNA.

**9. A CHILD GETS NEARLY 50 PERCENT OF THEIR DNA FROM EACH PARENT.** The percentage is slightly different for boys and girls. Due to all the possible combinations of parent's DNA, siblings share approximately 50 percent of the same DNA.

**10.** According to research and calculation by MIT's *Technology Review* magazine, the four leading commercial ancestry databases contain the DNA profiles of more than 26 million people as of late 2018. **IF THE CURRENT PACE OF INFORMATION GATHERING REMAINS UNCHANGED, THE TALLY WILL EXPLODE TO 100 MILLION PEOPLE IN 2020.**