

The Harper Ensemble Theatre Company, Liberal Arts Division
and Cultural Arts Committee Present

AUGUST WILSON'S

FENCES

DIRECTED BY LAURA PULIO COLBERT

Drama Lab Theater

Thursday, July 21, 8 p.m.

Friday, July 22, 8 p.m.

Saturday, July 23, 8 p.m.

Sunday, July 24, 2 p.m.

Tickets: harpercollege.edu/boxoffice

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*Featuring: Dwight Brown, David Grissom, Jenece Upton, Dane Hammond,
Donnie Marshall, Simon Gebremedhin & Alyssa Ahn**

Stage Manager
BRIAN MILLER

Original Music Composition
& Sound Design
MARC BETH

Scenic Design
SYDNEY LYNNE

Lighting Design
ANDREW MEYERS

Costume Design
JANE DEBOND

Fight Director
JOHN MCFARLAND

Property Design
PAUL DOMBROWSKI

FENCES is produced through special arrangements with Concord Theatricals

PATRONS AND GUESTS

Actors will be unmasked during tonight's performance. For your safety and for the safety of our artists and immunocompromised guests, we recommend that all patrons wear a well fitted mask over their nose and mouth while in attendance. Enjoy the show!

Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of the management. During the performance, please refrain from unwrapping candy or making other noises that may disturb others.

Please silence all cell phones, pagers and watch alarms. The use of cameras, videotaping or any other recording in the theatre is strictly prohibited.

No food or drink is allowed in the theatre.

* Indicates Harper student

From the Director...

As a graduate student at the National Theatre Conservatory, I had the honor of observing legendary African American director Israel Hicks wrestle the words of August Wilson. I recall sitting above the stage in the catwalk watching him help actors bend and twist this remarkable dialogue into action. Night after night I watched and learned. The power and weight of August Wilson's words left a lasting impression on this young student actor. One that has shaped my journey as both artist and educator. I've been drawn to Wilson's work ever since.

Directing *Fences* has been an eye-opening life changing experience. I'd expect nothing less from my favorite American playwright. Securing the rights was tricky. Wilson's work is rarely released for community college performances, especially one so close to the city of Chicago. Somehow fate was on our side and, despite COVID delays along with rehearsal quarantines, and performance cancellations we are pleased to offer our very best effort.

I know I speak for the entire ensemble when I thank you for joining us this evening and supporting our work. We are proud of what we have been able to accomplish and hope you enjoy tonight's summer workshop performance of August Wilson's *Fences*.

Blessings & Peace

Laura Pulio Colbert

Director of Theatre

Production Personnel

Director
Laura Pulio Colbert

Music Dramaturg
Sean Colbert

Stage Manager
Brian Miller

Sports Dramaturg
Andrew Wilson

Original Music Composition
& Sound Design
Marc Beth

Scenic Design
Sydney Lynne

Fight Director
John McFarland

Lighting Design
Andrew Meyers

Assistant to the Fight Director
Meg Konieczka

Costume Design
Jane DeBondt

Assistant Stage Manager
***Emily Willis**

Property Design
Paul Dombrowski

Backstage Manager
***Elizabeth Michniak**

Running Crew
Cynthia Brown

Light Board Operator
***Josephine Zastawny**

Set Construction
PAC Tech Staff & Volunteers

Sound Board Operator
***Shea Leonard**

Box Office
Dan Miller

PAC Technical Director
Chelsea Lynn

Production Photography
Steve Donish

Construction Coordinator
Lisa Giebler

Cast of Characters

TROY MAXSON	David Grissom
JIM BONO, <i>Troy's friend</i>	Dwight Brown
ROSE, <i>Troy's wife</i>	Jenece Upton
LYONS, <i>Troy's oldest son by previous marriage</i>	Dane Hammond
GABRIEL, <i>Troy's brother</i>	Donnie Marshall
CORY, <i>Troy and Rose's son</i>	Simon Gebremedhin
RAYNELL, <i>Troy's daughter</i>	*Alissa Ahn

Setting

The setting is the yard which fronts the only entrance to the Maxson household.

Act One

Scene 1	<i>1957, Pittsburgh PA. It is Friday night, payday, as two friends engage in a ritual of talk and drink</i>
Scene 2	<i>The following morning.</i>
Scene 3	<i>Four hours later.</i>
Scene 4	<i>Friday, two weeks later.</i>

(There will be one 10-Minute Intermission)

Act Two

Scene 1	<i>The following morning.</i>
Scene 2	<i>Six months later.</i>
Scene 3	<i>Late evening, three days later.</i>
Scene 4	<i>Two months later.</i>
Scene 5	<i>The time is 1965.</i>

About the Production Team

Marc Beth (Original Music Composition & Sound Design) is thrilled to be working on this production of *Fences*, having previously served as Sound Designer for *American Idiot* with the Harper Ensemble Theatre Company. He is the producing director of the musical theatre program at Elgin Community College. He has designed sound for theatrical establishments throughout the western suburbs, notably, Elgin Community College and Metropolis Performing Arts Center. Marc has also appeared on stage at Harper College as Judge Turpin in *Sweeney Todd*. He is a faculty member at Elgin Community College, where he coordinates the music department, and teaches music production.

Laura Pulio Colbert (Director), professor in the Department of Communication Arts and Director of Theatre is a graduate of the National Theatre Conservatory (MFA) who has directed and produced countless shows over her 29-year career as an educator. She was recently selected from a pool of over 650 actors for inclusion in the Illinois Shakespeare Festival's 40th Anniversary celebration, *40-Years/40-Actors*, which recognized significant artists who have appeared with the festival and gone on to prestigious careers in the arts as actors, directors and educators. Laura has been a member of Actors Equity Association for the past 30 years, and has performed in theatres across the United States and internationally at the Moscow Art Theatre in Russia and at the National Theatre of Great Britain. Laura continues to perform regularly, is married to fellow Harper alum Sean Colbert and is the proud mother of Tom (19) and Cat (17).

Jane DeBondt (Costume Design) is Harper's resident costume designer. A Millikin University graduate, she was an Equity actress for 10 years before becoming a professional costume designer/seamstress in 1994. She has designed and built costumes for professional theatres and schools in and around the Chicago area and across the U.S. Jane's most recent work includes *Joseph*, *Spongebob Square Pants*, & *Sense & Sensibility*. Jane & her favorite design partner Jesus Perez look forward to costuming *Jerry's Girls* for Season of Concern in June.

Paul Dombrowski (Property Design) Paul has been the Scenic Designer for over 30 productions at Harper College. Some of his favorites are *Urinetown*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Pippin*, *Hair*, *Laramie Project* and *Moon for the Misbegotten*. Paul is also the Technical Director and Scenic Designer at Rolling Meadows High School and Prop Master at Maine West High School. Paul also designs props for The Polar Express train ride in Chicago, Whippany, New Jersey, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, and New Orleans, Louisiana. Paul is a visual art teacher in the Palatine schools and has been teaching for over 30 years, he is also on the planning committee for the 2020 Illinois High School Theater Festival. Paul is married to Joe Serio and they are fierce advocates for LGBT rights. Paul is often very tired.

Chelsea Lynn (Technical Director) has spent over fifteen years serving performing arts centers throughout the Chicago area, and is happy to have found a home at Harper College. An experienced production manager, lighting designer and technician, some of her favorite past projects include lighting designs for *Language of Angels* (Harper College), *Spring Awakening* and *American Idiot* (Elgin Community College), *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* and *The 39 Steps* (Metropolis Performing Arts Center), *BOLD MOVES* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Rockford Dance Company). Her upcoming projects include *Noises Off!* (Metropolis) and *Kiss Me Kate* (Elgin Community College).

(continued)

Andrew Meyers (Lighting Design) is the resident Lighting Designer for Music Theatre Works and Northwestern University Opera, and the Lighting Supervisor for The University of Chicago. Locally, he has designed shows for Chicago Opera Theatre, Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, Redmoon Theater, Remy Bumpo, Steppenwolf Theatre and many others. Further afield, he is a frequent contributor to such companies as The Arkansas Rep, Ballet Memphis, Broward Stage Door, Next Act Theatre, Skylight Opera and Virginia Musical Theatre. Besides lighting a variety of corporate events and fashion shows around the country, he has also designed tours for Ween and The Richard Thompson Band.

About the Cast



Alissa Ahn* (Raynell) is thrilled to be making her debut on the Harper stage with *Fences*. Alissa has been involved in acting and drama since she was 9 years old, having first begun her theatrical endeavors in school productions. She has studied dance and enjoys being on stage and sharing her passion and art with others. This summer, Alissa will be studying at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts where she will learn more about acting for the camera.



Dwight Brown (Jim Bono) This is not Dwight's first time on the Harper College stage. He has appeared as the Captain in *Bury the Dead*, Chausible in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Newt Lee in *Parade*, Hoke Colburn in *Driving Miss Daisy*, and Albert/Kevin in *Clybourne Park*. He is especially proud that he was able to perform a scene from *Driving Miss Daisy* in front of playwright/author Alfred Uhry. He has also performed in local theatre productions of *Ragtime*, *War of the Worlds* and appears regularly with the Elgin Theatre Company's annual Christmas Radio Show. He is always up for a challenge and loves learning from fellow actors. He dedicates his performance to his children Bianca and Brock, his granddaughter Genevieve Rose, and always to his muse and loving wife, Cindy.



Simon Gebremedhin (Cory) is excited to be making his live debut with the Harper Ensemble having been seen most recently in Harper's virtual adaptation of *Facing Our Truth: Ten-Minute Plays on Trayvon, Race & Ethnicity* also directed by LPC. Most recently he has performed in *Ethiopian America* with Definition Theatre at Victory Gardens. He has additionally appeared at The Goodman Theatre in *The Principals of Cartography* for the I AM...Fest. Favorite roles include: Abdul Jackson in *Powerless Gods*, Prospero in *The Tempest*, Dan Connally in *An Almost Perfect Person*, Jim Bayliss in *All My Sons*, Blake in *Neighborhood 3: Requisition Of Doom* and Kyle O'Boyle in *Legally Blonde*. He would like to thank his family, close friends & all his mentors and teachers for the knowledge, love and support they have given him along the way.



David Grissom (Troy Maxson) received his training at the Detroit Repertory Theatre, Act One Studios, The Second City, O'Connor Casting Company, Tim Gregory's Shakespeare Workshop, eta Creative Arts Foundation, and Victory Gardens Training Program. Notable roles include: *Walter, A Raisin in the Sun* (New Branch Theatre Co.); *A Package for Max* (New Branch Theatre Co.); Bernard, *The Talented Tenth* (Overflow Ensemble Theatre Co.); Bro. Pays/Detective Cutts, *If the Preacher Ain't Right* (New Branch Theatre Co.), and; Capt. Richard Davenport, *A Soldier's Play* (New Branch Theatre Co.). David is humbled for this opportunity to live the role of Troy Maxson for the Harper Ensemble Theatre. In doing so, David pays homage to the memory and life of August Wilson, Lloyd Richards, Ira Aldridge, and Pauline Viola West Grissom. He additionally expresses his profound thanks to Laura Pulio Colbert, Steve Merle, Calvin and Ansonia Gibbs, Runako Jahi, and David W. Grissom, Sr.



Dane Hammond (Lyons) is thrilled to return to the Harper College stage under the direction of LPC for this production of *Fences* having previously performed as a member of the ensemble in both *American Idiot* and *Hair*. Dane is a dancer who enjoys performing in musical theatre (which has been the primary focus of his work as an actor for the past ten years) including: (under "Dane Strange") *State Fair* (Ensemble), *La Cage Aux Folles* (Jacob), *Beauty and the Beast* (LeFou), *Something Rotten!* (Robin), *White Christmas* (Ensemble). In addition (as "Dane Hammond") he was seen as Barry Champlain in *Talk Radio*, Daisy in *Baby with the Bath Water*, Ensemble in *American Idiot* and *Hair* (at Harper College) and in Disney's *Out of the Box* (Himself).

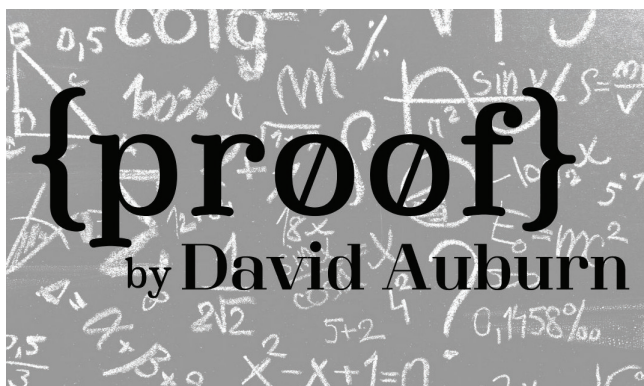


Donnie Marshall (Gabriel) Chicago-based actor, Donnie Marshall is known for his larger than life physicality, his animated speech pattern and his soul-filled perception of the world. He is always interested in learning more about the human spirit and is pleased to be making his Harper debut in *Fences*. Donnie has acted in films, sitcoms, theatre and a variety of narrated audio productions. For Donnie, acting is not just *reading* words - but *becoming* words. Words are the vehicle that drives the human spirit forward toward its ideal. Words are sacred to Donnie and he welcomes the opportunity to share his creativity through language and art. Donnieactorartist.com



Jenece Upton (Rose) is thrilled to be returning to the Harper Ensemble Theatre, where she previously appeared in productions of *Too Heavy For Your Pocket* (Evelyn Brandon) and *American Idiot* (Ensemble)! As a Chicago-based actress and vocalist, Jenece has performed in several shows throughout the area, which most recently include *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill* (Billie Holiday u/s) and *Children of Eden* (Eve). When not performing, Jenece works as a corporate citizenship and communications professional at a Fortune 500 company, and in her spare time, she enjoys reading, traveling, and spending time with family and friends. She is honored to help celebrate the work of August Wilson, and in the future, looks forward to continuing to tell compelling and diverse stories both on stage and on screen.

Harper Ensemble Theatre Company
2022 - 2023 Season



Directed by Laura Pulio Colbert

Winner of the 2001 Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award for Best Play.

Following the death of her brilliant but unstable mathematician father, Catherine, on the eve of her 25th birthday faces her own volatile emotions. With the arrival of her estranged sister Claire, and the attentions of Hal, a former student of her father's, Catherine is forced to face the most difficult problem of all: How much of her father's madness – or genius – will she inherit?

“...combines elements of mystery and surprise with old-fashioned storytelling to provide a compelling evening of theatre . . . PROOF is a smart and compassionate play of ideas.” —**NY Daily News**

“PROOF surprises us with its aliveness . . . Mr. Auburn takes pleasure in knowledge . . . At the same time, he is unshowily fresh and humane . . . —**NY Observer**

Drama Lab Theater – Fall 2022

November 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 20

Friday & Saturday at 8p.m., Sunday at 2p.m.

Audition Dates: Thursday, September 8, 7-9p.m. or Friday, September 9, 7-9p.m.

First Rehearsal: Tuesday, September 13.

Please prepare one monologue from contemporary theatre (1-3 minutes) and be prepared to participate in cold-readings from the script. Auditions will take place in the Liberal Arts Center Drama Lab (L109). For additional information, or to schedule an audition appointment contact director Laura Pulio Colbert at lpulio@harpercollege.edu

Buy tickets at harpercollege.edu/boxoffice or call 847.925.6100.



By Boo Killebrew

Directed by Kevin Long

After her release from prison, Lettie is desperate to regain custody of her teenage children. Her children, who have been cared for by her half-sister, want little to do with her. Her re-entry job is anything but gentle as she takes on the dark, harsh world of welding. Lettie will stop at nothing to reclaim her family and start life anew; however, she is constantly confronted by her past and must make impossible choices to protect her future. Inspired by real Chicago stories, Lettie is a powerful, moving, and funny play. Content Advisory: strong language that may not be appropriate for younger patrons.

★★★½ “A POWERFUL DRAMA of Heartbreak and Hope.
— **Chicago Tribune**, 4/17/2018

“A Masterpiece. One of the Great Chicago Plays of our Generation.”
— **Chicago Reader**, 4/18/2018

Performing Arts Center – Spring 2023
March 17, 18, 19, 24, 25, 26

Friday & Saturday at 8p.m., Sunday at 2p.m.

Audition Information: Seeking actors of all ethnicities, physical abilities, sizes, and gender identities are encouraged to audition. Contact director Kevin Long at klong@harpercollege.edu for additional information and to schedule an audition appointment.

Audition Dates: Monday, December 5 and Tuesday, December 6, 7p.m.–9:30 p.m.

Callback: Thursday, December 8 at 7p.m. by invitation.

Please prepare one contemporary monologue (2-3 minutes). Please bring a headshot and resume.

Website: harpercollege.edu/arts

Buy tickets at harpercollege.edu/boxoffice or call 847.925.6100.

Willis Scholarship

Professor Emerita Mary Jo Willis was a long-time member of the Harper College faculty who taught and directed plays and musicals at the college. Her impact on the lives of countless students and her life-long commitment to supporting the arts continues today with her scholarship which is awarded each year to one deserving student. Mary Jo believes that nothing compares with live theatre in its power to educate, entertain, inspire and remind us that we all share a common and lovely humanity. She is grateful for the opportunity Harper College gave her to share her passion with so many wonderful students, including last year's 13th scholarship award winner **Marcus Pallen**, along with current student **Sebastian Rivera** who is the 14th recipient of the Willis Scholarship.

Special Thanks

Sean Colbert, Brian Miller, Marc Beth, Jane DeBondt, Paul Dombrowski, Jaime Riewerts & Liberal Arts Division, Andrew Meyers, John McFarland, Dave & Mollie Gordon, Chelsea Lynn, Jeff Przybylo & Department of Communication Arts, Lisa Giebler, Darlene Nieber, Marguerita Whitby, Mike Barzacchini & Marketing Services, Steve Donisch, Tara Gray, Adam Stevens, Victoria Mineo & Accounting Services, Thom Lange & PAC Support Staff, Dan Miller & Box Office Staff, Sue Borchek-Smith, Kurt Hemmer & Cultural Arts Committee, Harper Police Department & Facilities Staff

REDUCE. REUSE. RECYCLE.

Help us help the environment. If you choose not to take your program with you, please hand it back to your usher or place it in one of our marked recycling bins at the end of the performance.

Thank you.



Harper College®

1200 West Algonquin Road
Palatine, Illinois 60067-7398

Harper College is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, gender-related identity, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status or sexual orientation. 30909 KD 07/22