

HOMEGROWN



HOMEGROWN, a collaborative performance project, brings local legends of DC's spoken word scene together with Ward 7 and Ward 8 residents, through an innovative partnership between THEARC Theater, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, and Spit Dat, DC's longest-running open mic.

Weaving together poetry, storytelling, hip hop, and verse, HOMEGROWN is an original performance piece that celebrates local spoken word artists and the resilience of DC, its people, and our communities. HOMEGROWN was developed through SPIT DAT Academy, a dynamic program that supports the growth of the city's next great performance artists, led by Woolly Mammoth Artists-in-Residence Dwayne Lawson-Brown and Drew Anderson. Come find strength in community and experience home.

HOMEGROWN

IN ASSOCIATION WITH SPIT DAT AND THEARC THEATRE

PERFORMERS AND WRITERS:

Hosts:

Drew Anderson

Dwayne Lawson-Brown

Featured Performers:

Charity Blackwell

Kenneth Carroll

O-Slice

Spit Dat Academy Members:

Shay Izegwire

Shehariah Johnson

Christian Parks

Kiarra Patterson

Yalan Sesay

Understudy:

Amiah McGinty

CREATIVE TEAM

Director: Alina Collins Maldonado

Composer: Christylez Bacon

Scenic Designer: Tim Hache

Lighting Designer: Alec Sparks

Sound Designer: Cresent Hayes

CREW

Production Manager: Autumn Mitchell

Production Supervisor: Lauren Pikel

Production Assistant: Lücién Reubens

Light Board Operator: Doug Del Pizzo

Sound Board Operator: Cresent Hayes

iCAN Fellows: Anthony Powell (SM/Carp), Roman Bennett (Sound), Arianna Lofton (Sound), Thomas Tate (Carp/Elec), Donell Hooks

(Electrics)

COVID Compliance Officer: Ian Claar

**PRODUCTION SUPPORT FOR HOMEGROWN
GENEROUSLY PROVIDED BY JULIE RIOS**

CONTENT TRANSPARENCY: THIS PRODUCTION CONTAINS
DISCUSSIONS OF GENTRIFICATION, VERBAL AND PHYSICAL ABUSE,
MENTAL ILLNESS, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, ABLEISM, AND DRUG USE.



Shay Izegwire



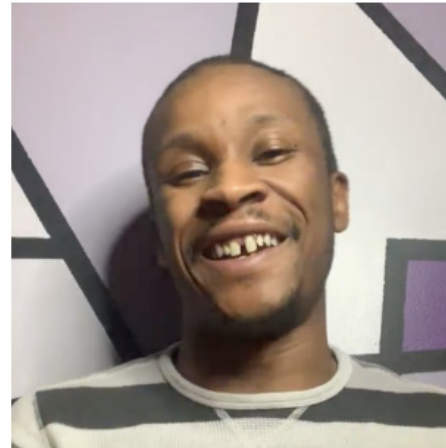
Shehariah Johnson



Dwayne Lawson-Brown



Drew Anderson



Christian Parks



Kiarra Patterson



Yalan Sesay



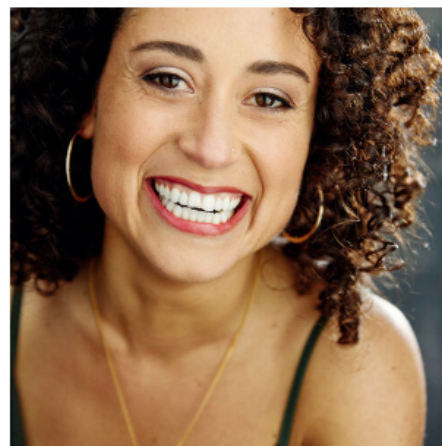
Charity Blackwell



Kenneth Carroll



O-Slice



Alina Collins Maldonado

+ SPIT DAT ACADEMY MEMBER BIOS

Shay Izegwire is a 30-year-old artist that people should look out for. She uses poetry as an art to express her own stories and stories that may help other people. Shay has been writing poetry since the tender age of nine, but did her first open mic at the age of 13. Shay was not born with a silver spoon in her mouth, and with poetry, she is able to let some of her emotions out in a creative way. Shay performs at a host of open mics in the DMV area and wants to use her poetry to help others.

Shehariah Johnson is a 28-year-old graduate of American University, class of 2014, with a major in Psychology and minor in Spanish. She is a domestic violence survivor and activist, merging art with her journey. She is a proud boy mom to a little being who has

changed her Life for the better. She is also the new CEO/Founder of her 501(c)3 nonprofit organization called Silence Kills, which is dedicated to supporting survivors on their journeys of healing. She is on a journey of healing and recovery as she fulfills her role as a Wounded Healer. Since being reborn in 2015 due to Domestic Violence, it is her life's mission to empower, educate, and encourage speaking on the unspoken. She uses spoken word as a therapy tool and way to help manage her survivor-hood. She wants her Life to represent Hope, Resiliency & relying on Faith when it seems all else fails. She is that Phoenix that crashed and burned, now fluttering her magnificent wings out of the fire.

Christian Parks, B.A. in Theater and M.A. in Teaching, hails from Philadelphia. DC transplant living in the Great Ward 8. He holds that God is the giver of all things beautiful—even good art. He strongly believes that artistry is the talent that breathes new life. Christian is a poet, a novelist, a teacher, and a friend. Christian seeks to use those talents to bring healing and hope to a world full of pain and sorrow. Solidarity is his process and liberation is his goal. The art will speak for itself as the audience encounters a story unlike any they have heard before.

Kiarra Patterson, affectionately known as Ki, was bred and cornbread fed in Southeast DC. She is a graduate of the first HBCU, Lincoln University, and is completing her dual masters in Social Work and Sex Therapy at Widener University in May of 2021. She is a poet, self-published author, and certified teaching artist, but she knows there is no limit to further developing her craft. Ki believes poetry is a healing power and continues to create the space for expression and

release in inclusive spaces.

Yalan Sesay, hailing from New Jersey, is a 27-year-old vocal percussionist and poet who resides in the Ward 8 District of Washington, DC. From a young age, Yalan has been practicing and honing his craft of beatboxing in various street performances and open mics. He recently started poetry under the tutelage of the legendary DC Spit Dat founders Dwayne Lawson-Brown and Drew Anderson. When he isn't working on his crafts, Yalan can be found working on his Martial Arts skills, practicing Muay Thai and Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu. Most of the time, he can be found working hard for his community by positively influencing the lives of youth that are in transition from the streets as a Career Pathways Specialist for the Covenant House of Greater Washington. Through his artforms, Yalan wishes to positively inspire and expose others to different ideas.

+ FEATURED ARTISTS BIOS

Charity Blackwell is a spoken word artist, poet, emcee, motivational speaker, activist, and teacher who hails from South Carolina and now calls Washington, DC home. As a queer woman of color and daughter of a former NAACP president, Charity has always used her talents to uplift the LGBTQ and African American communities, as well as advocating for social justice, youth development, domestic violence awareness, and women's rights. She's performed on stages and media outlets near and far, including Lincoln Theater, The Kennedy Center, The Hirshhorn Museum, BBC News, Major League Soccer Network, TedxTysons, and more. Charity is a graduate of Trinity

University in Washington, DC, where she earned a bachelor's and master's in communications.

Kenneth Carroll is a native Washingtonian whose poetry and prose has appeared in numerous publications including, *Bum Rush The Page*, *In Search Of Color Everywhere*, *Potomac Review*, *Worcester Review*, *Obsidian*, *The Washington Post*, *Indiana Review*, *Beyond the Frontier* and *Gargoyle*. His book of poetry is entitled *So What: For The White Dude Who Said This Ain't Poetry*. He has had 3 of his plays produced including, *Make My Funk The P-Funk*, published by Ishmael Reed in *Konch*. He is former director of DC WritersCorps and the African American Writers Guild He is the 2021 Blood Orange Review winner in fiction. He was a writer for BET's Story Porch program featuring Ruby Dee and Ossie Davis. He has performed at the Kennedy Center, Nuyorican Café, Library of Congress, Beyond Baroque, Gala Hispanic Theater, and at universities and cultural institutions around the country. He is married and the proud father of a daughter and two sons.

Pg county, Maryland. Ibadan, Nigeria. The color blue. 90s television and cartoons. A lot of really good raps. A lot of songs that make you feel something. Uses words as a canvas. The show stealing bandit. **O-Slice.**

+ HOMEGROWN TEAM BIOS

Alina Collins Maldonado (*Director*) is an actor, director, theater educator, and playwright based in the Washington, DC area. As an

actor, she has performed at The Lincoln Center, Shakespeare Theatre Company, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Folger Theatre, 1st Stage, and GALA Hispanic Theatre among others. As a director, and bilingual theater educator, Alina has worked with youth arts programs in the DC area, guiding students in the creation and production of their own work. Alina has had the pleasure of creating theatre with students from ESOL classes and backgrounds as well. As a playwright, Alina is invested in telling authentic stories from the hearts of underrepresented communities. With her journalistic approach to writing, she seeks out stories of memories and truths that spin unexpected threads of connection between us as humans. Alina holds a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre, and in Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies, from Virginia Commonwealth University. Alina is a member of Actor's Equity Association.

Drew Anderson is founder and co-host of Spit Dat, the longest-running open mic in DC, and co-creator of the critically-acclaimed stage production *From Gumbo to Mumbo*. Recipient of the prestigious DC Arts and Humanities Fellowship, Drew has recently merged his decade-plus of artistic acumen and educational expertise to develop SpooF School and C.R.U.N.K. Academy, two dynamic arts education integration programs which teach students of all ages how to make learning fun by "making fun" of their learning. Equal parts teaching artist and performing artist, Drew is on a mission to share his love of drama, comedy, poetry, parody, and hip hop with all who are within his reach.

Dwayne Lawson-Brown is one of the hosts of DC's longest running

open mic series, Spit Dat, the co-creator of the Helen Hayes Nominated From Gumbo to Mumbo, which premiered at Keegan Theatre in 2019, the venue host captain for Busboys and Poets 450K, and the recipient of several honors, including the 2019 Mary Bowman Award for Service Through Artistry from the International Conference on HIV Stigma, the 2013 Emerging Artist Award from Delta Sigma Theta, Inc., the 2012 Emerging Leader Award from the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, and the 2007 Presidential Community Service Award. Whether rapping about the changing face of Southeast DC, the joy of raising his son, or the ache Black communities feel every time another name becomes a hashtag, his work stands as an ambassador's journal opened to the world.

Christylez Bacon (*pronounced: chris-styles*) is a GRAMMY® Nominated Progressive Hip-Hop artist and multi-instrumentalist from Southeast, Washington, DC. As a performer, Christylez multi-tasks between various instruments such as the West African djembe drum, acoustic guitar, and the human beat-box (oral percussion), all while continuing the oral tradition of storytelling through his lyrics.

Tim Hache is a production professional and tour manager new to the DC scene, excited to be serving as Interim Technical Director at Woolly Mammoth Theatre Co, and Scenic Designer on Homegrown. Previous production manager and technical director credits include (NYC): Lincoln Center, MCC Theatre, NYU, Columbia Artists Management Inc, Signature Theatre and many more. Previous Design credits (CT): Playhouse on Park, Capital Classics, UHartt.

Crescent Hayes (*Sound Designer*): In 2012, Crescent received a

Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Theatre Arts Technology, with a focus in Sound Design. In 2014, she received her first theatre review for her work as Sound Designer on the production *Not About Nightingales* directed by Eric Ruffin, describing her sound design as “an omniscient, foreboding force, ambitious in scope...” Since then, her credits include: *Fabulation* (Mosaic Theater Company), *HER-story* (Kennedy Center), *The Laramie Project* (Duke Ellington School of the Arts), *BLKS* (Woolly Mammoth Theater), *Three Cheers to Grace* (YPT), *Use All Available Doors* (Pinky Swear Productions), *Hope in the Hood* (Amazing Grace Conservatory) and more. Crescent Hayes is also a freelance Live Audio Engineer and Visual Artist. She has aspirations to one-day design on Broadway and continue touring with various performing artists as their Live Audio Engineer, all while continuing to fill spaces with her original art exhibits and paintings. Training: Howard University. www.linktr.ee/cresentrochelle

Alec Sparks ([@alecsparks](https://twitter.com/alecsparks)) is a generalist theatrical maker and problem solver. In addition to his day job at Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, he's designed makerspaces, written software used for shows around the world, and runs an online reference for theatrical hackers – stagehacks.com

A NOTE FROM KRISTEN

In 2014, after over a decade away, accepting the position of

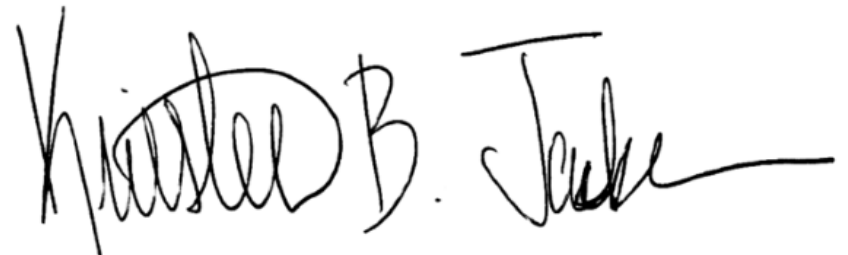
Connectivity Director for Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company represented a return home to Washington, DC where I was born and raised. Woolly's Connectivity Department was founded to pair the theatre's artistic mission to produce invigorating and courageous new work, with its social mission to ignite dialogue and inspire social change. This often looked like a plethora of partnerships and programming based on the questions embedded in the plays Woolly produced. Over the course of my first few years at Woolly, I became eager to understand how we could focus our community partnership goals away from a breadth of relationships rooted in Woolly's artistic choices towards a depth of relationships -- and how this might bring even greater resonance to the art we make.

This season's launch of the Connectivity Core Partner Program represents a pivotal moment in my vision of Connectivity's next evolution. These Connectivity Core Partnerships are long-term mutually beneficial relationships with organizations who share the same values around inclusion, anti-racism, social justice, and the power of art as a tool for advancing these values. Connectivity itself serves as a strategy for centering equity in our relationship-building, and creating connections between artists, audiences, and community organizations that are power and impact aware. Under the leadership of Woolly Mammoth's Artistic Director, Maria Manuela Goyanes, we have come to see Connectivity as an approach woven into the fabric of the entire organization, and not just the work of one department.

HOMEgrown is the product of a collaboration between Woolly Mammoth and two of our inaugural Core Partners – Spit Dat, DC's

longest running open mic and THEARC Theatre, a home for arts and culture east of the river. Work with our Connectivity Core Partners is central to our mission, not auxiliary -- it is deeply meaningful that Woolly's first in-person performances following the Covid-19 pandemic are the result of a long-term artistic planning process with two of our core partners.

We hope this piece inspires you to think about the relationship between spoken word and theatre, and the ways in which each can serve as an entry point for the other. We also invite you to celebrate the citizen artists of Ward 7 and 8, who have been participating in SPIT DAT Academy workshops since March to hone their writing and performance skills, and whose work forms the backbone of this collaborative project. Their talents, commitment, and courage in sharing their experiences with us and each other serves as a welcome reminder of the essential role that art can play in building and bridging communities. HOMEgrown honors the distinctive characteristics and layers of complexity we find both in this city, and within ourselves. It also reminds me how fortunate I am to have found a second home – Woolly Mammoth – that uses the arts to contribute to the health and well-being of my beloved hometown.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kirsten B. Jank". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first name "Kirsten" is written in a large, rounded script, followed by a smaller "B." and the last name "Jank" in a more elongated, sweeping script.

KRISTEN JACKSON

Connectivity Director,
Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company

A NOTE FROM KIMBERLY

"If you surrendered to the air, you can ride it."

-Toni Morrison

As a Black artist, creative, and administrator I find power in advocacy. Access and opportunities for Black artists and creatives dwindled, or in many cases were non-existent, during the pandemic. We needed to surrender to that moment in time and were able to find strength and resilience to persevere. As we slowly reemerge, we at THEARC Theater are continuing to prioritize creating equitable opportunities for Black and Brown citizens to consume and train in the arts. HOMEGROWN showcases the best of our humanity through uplifting and nurturing the voices of the artists and sharing this work with the community and the world.

My journey as a Black youth artist in Washington, DC was extraordinary; and what a rewarding feeling to be celebrated for being *Young, Gifted and Black*. My love and joy of the arts inspired me to BECOME an Arts Administrator. Representation and access is key to make CHANGE.

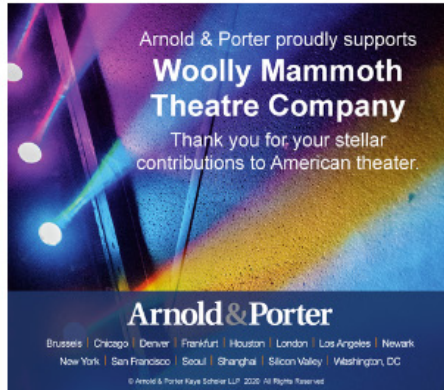
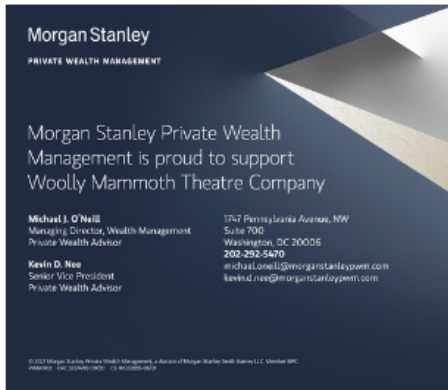
Today and beyond we surrender to fierce advocacy to be SEEN, HEARD, and RESPECTED as Black artists, creatives, and administrators. THEARC Theater has employed, featured, and trained DC's best and brightest community youth and emerging professionals in our 15-year history. Our journey to create pathways for the next generation is inspired by the free, joyful, and hopeful existence of future generations who ride the air of artistry and activism to bring about the necessary CHANGE we want and need in the arts and beyond. Unapologetically we must be unyielding in serving OUR communities with TRUTH and building a lasting legacy for Black artists.



KIMBERLY E. DOUGLAS

Director, THEARC Theater
Building Bridges Across the River (BBAR)

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS



+ WOOLLY MAMMOTH THEATRE COMPANY

Woolly Mammoth is “the hottest theater company in town” (*Washington Post*); priding itself on developing, producing, and making theatre that disrupts conventional processes and stimulates transformative experiences. For almost four decades, Woolly has held a unique position at the leading edge of the American theater, earning a reputation for staying “uniquely plugged in to the mad temper of the times” (*New York Times*). The co-leadership of María Manuela Goyanes (Artistic Director) and Emika Abe (Managing Director) is supported by a core company of artists that holds itself to a high standard of artistic excellence. Woolly is relentless in its desire to take risks, experiment, innovate, interrogate, and create a radically inclusive community. Located in Washington, DC, Woolly Mammoth stands upon occupied, unceded territory: the ancestral homeland of the Nacotchtank whose descendants belong to the Piscataway peoples.

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Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company is proud to be supported by an active and engaged 26-member Board of Directors.

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2021 SOAPBOX CHALLENGE

We would also like to give special acknowledgement to the **Bold Builders** – the winning team of our 2021 Soapbox Challenge raising the most money for **Woolly Mammoth**.

EMIKAABE

SWATI AGRAWAL

KIMBERLY DOUGLAS

MICHAEL FITZPATRICK

WENDY HAGEN

LINETTE S. HWU

WOOLLY MAMMOTH STAFF

Artistic Director Maria Manuela Goyanes
 Managing Director Emika Abe
 Artistic Director Emeritus Howard Shaiwitz
 Box Office Supervisors DJ Batchelor, Allyson Boate, Kira Burri,
 Evan Crump, Liam Daley,
 Amanda DiMartini, Chelsea Foster, Marley Kabin,

ADMINISTRATION

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Company Manager..... Elynora Sapp
Interim Executive Office Coordinator..... Allison Lehman

ARTISTIC

Director of New Work..... Sonia Fernandez
Artistic Associate and BOLD Fellow..... Jess Chayes
New Work Fellow..... Jeremy Pesigan

CONNECTIVITY

Connectivity Director..... Kristen Jackson
Connectivity Fellow..... Citlali Pizarro
Connectivity Associate..... Amiah McGinty

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CONNECTIVITY AMBASSADORS

The Ambassadors are a network of DC community leaders with connections to other arts and culture organizations, frontline service nonprofits, academic institutions, and policy think tanks who care deeply about Woolly, and work closely with the Connectivity Department to mobilize their constituencies.

Andrew Stoffel	JR Russ
Caitlin Caplinger	Jacqueline Flores
Chelsea James	Jade Flower Foster
Clarence Fluker	Janae Williams
Deirdre Darden	Jay Forth
Dwayne Lawson-Brown	Jon Jon Johnson
Frankie Amitrano	Justyn Hintze
Izetta Mobley	Karen Lawrence

Allison Lehman, Rebecca Rovezzi, Kristina Williams
Box Office Associates..... Addie Gayoso;
Kara Harrison; Cynthia Perdue; Jacob Schnabel; AnaMarie King
Concessionaires..... Cynthia Davis; Hana Grothe; Hillary Jones;
Seoyoung Kim; William Maedel; Felicity Poussaint;
Nathan Sanders; Lindsey Sandifer
Merchandiser..... Myra Cruz

PRODUCTION

Interim Production Manager..... Bethany Weinstein Stewart
Interim Technical Director..... Tim Hache
Audio / Visual & Lighting Supervisor..... Alec Sparks
Properties Supervisor..... Becca Tuteur
Production Management Fellow..... Autumn Mitchell
Scenic Artist..... Carolyn Hampton
Wardrobe Supervisor..... Andrew Landan Cutler
Assistant Technical Director..... Noah Beya

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