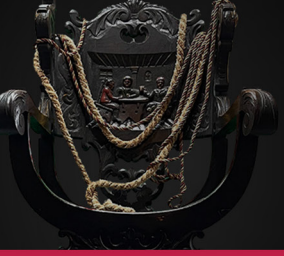
SOUTHBANK
THEATRE COMPANY

MARIE ANTOINETTE & The Magical Negroes

BY
TERRY GUEST

DIRECTED BY
KELLY MILLS



SOUTHBANK
THEATRE COMPANY

PRESENTS

THE PROFESSION

A NEW PLAY

By Marcia Eppich-Harris

COMING IN FALL OF 2022

MAKE HISTORY

The "Magical Negroes" Defined

by Marcia Eppich-Harris, Artistic Director

We finish up our inaugural season with Terry Guest's *Marie Antoinette and the Magical Negroes*. I discovered this play over a year ago on New Play Exchange, while looking for new works to help shape our first season, which has focused on history. From the moment I read the title, I knew I had to read this play.

I have to admit my own ignorance about the term "Magical Negroes." It wasn't until director Kelly Mills explained it to me that I knew the title was far more meaningful than I initially realized. "Magical Negroes," popularized in 2001 by director Spike Lee, is a term describing the film trope of using Black people as loving, inspirational, or wise characters that aid and support white protagonists — almost, or in fact, magically. Some examples include Mammy (Hattie McDaniel) in *Gone with the Wind*, Morpheus (Laurence Fishburne) in *The Matrix*, and Bagger (Will Smith) in *The Legend of Bagger Vance*. The characters usually have no history or life of their own, but show up in the story for the sole purpose of supporting a white protagonist. The Black characters used this way in film usually represent one or more Black stereotypes: Mammy (caregiver), Jim Crow (trickster portrayed in minstrel shows), Savage (untamed animal), Sambo (simple minded, docile), and Sapphire (bossy, headstrong woman).

In *Marie Antoinette and the Magical Negroes*, each of the Black actors is part of Marie Antoinette's narrative, playing their stereotypical roles that Hollywood has traditionally assigned them. However, author Terry Guest also provides the Black characters with an interiority and history all their own, thereby transforming the Magical Negroes into people who represent lived experience in Black America. Calling the Black characters "the Tribe," Guest gives several Tribe members at least one monologue in which part of the Black experience is on display, including the Haitian rebellion, protesting in Ferguson, and the murder of George Floyd. Shifting between the modern world and the French Revolution, Guest shows that privileging white experience in entertainment is just another act of colonization and using Black characters as helpers to white protagonists becomes tokenism instead of real inclusion.

In *Marie Antoinette and the Magical Negroes*, Guest flips the script on this trope. Each actor represents several real and/or representative characters from history. When the Black characters represent white historical figures, Guest often transforms those characters into the white version of a magical support figure to Black activists. People such as John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, and others appear out of context to parrot their historical words in a way that mimics the Magical Negro trope — a white

character becomes the helper character without a history of their own. The difference between the white historical figures in Guest's play and the Magical Negro trope is that the white characters are often more harmful than helpful to their Black counterparts, as is the case with Napoleon, who reinstituted slavery in France after becoming emperor — or they are killed before their aid can be fully manifested, as is the case with JFK.

Marie Antoinette and the Magical Negroes has so much to say about rebellion, resistance, rage, and revolution, but on another level, it also asks us to interrogate our actions in diversity, equity, and inclusion. Through a structural approach to flipping the Hollywood narrative, Terry Guest puts the experiences of Black people at the center of history and illuminates the troubling reliance of whites on Blacks in film, theatre, and life in general.

For more information on the term "Magical Negroes," Black stereotypes, and more, see:

1. Laura Green, "Negative Racial Stereotypes and Their Effect on Attitudes Toward African-Americans"
2. Matt Zoller Seitz, "The Offensive Movie Cliche that Won't Die"
3. Audrey Colombe, "White Hollywood's Black Boogeyman"
4. Zuleyka Zevallos, "Hollywood Racism: The Magical Negro Trope"

Historical Dramatis Personae

by BJ Bruther

Terry Guest asks his audience to contemplate the interplay of recent American history and the French Revolution (1789-1799) in his play, Marie Antoinette and the Magical Negros. Here, we provide a historical dramatis personae of the characters you'll meet in the play.

FROM THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

Marie Antoinette (1755-1793): the much maligned foreign Queen of France, victim of vicious rumors, the cult of celebrity, and the hatred of the Other. She sees herself as a bird in a gilded cage of privilege and protocol, desperately seeking freedom. She will fall victim to the new method of execution, the guillotine, as do her husband and her hated lady-in-waiting, Anna de Noailles.

Louis XVI (1754-1793): her incompetent and impotent husband, the King of France, wallowing in nostalgia for a world in which a King can claim "I am the state" without flinching.

Anna de Noailles (1729-1794): hereditary noblewoman and lady-in-waiting to Marie Antoinette, a fierce guardian of the royal court and its protocols.

Axel von Fersen (1755-1810): a Swedish nobleman, former American revolutionary, and the Queen's BFF; he tried to help her escape, only to fail. He will return home to Sweden, rise to be the equivalent of a prime minister, only to be dragged from his carriage and beaten to death by a mob who believed that he poisoned the popular heir apparent to the throne.

Princess Lamballe, Marie of Savoy (1749-1792): a noblewoman and confidant of Marie Antoinette, beaten to death in the prison purge of September 1792.

"Evils, which are patiently endured when they seem inevitable, become intolerable once the idea of escape from them is suggested."

Alexis de Tocqueville, The Old Regime and the French Revolution

INTERPLAYING HISTORY

John F. Kennedy and his wife, Jacqueline, the storied couple of Camelot, faced with a powerful civil rights movement, c. 1963.

Ida B. Wells (1862-1931): a woman born into slavery, an advocate of change, a tireless campaigner against lynching, and founder of the NAACP. She believes in the power of words to change her world.

The shooting of Michael Brown at Ferguson, Missouri, in 2014, and the murder of George Floyd in 2020. The birth of Black Lives Matter: a resurgence of the peaceful protests of the Civil Rights era.

Touissant Loverture (1743-1803): the father of the Haitian revolution and the creator of a republic based upon the French revolution's call for "liberty, equality, and fraternity."

A critique of mass incarceration, often targeting People of Color, supported in the 13th Amendment of the Constitution of the United States of America.

Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821): the erstwhile revolutionary and military dictator of France, 1799-1815, who reinstituted slavery in France.

Marcia Eppich-Harris
Artistic Director
Aric Christian Harris
Creative Director
Casey Ross
Creative Media Services and Artistic Consultant

Inspired by History

by Kelly Mills, Director

This opportunity started off as a true manifestation. I was excited to show my ability to bring a playwright's work to life. Being able to use my toolbox of acting skills and imagination was only the beginning. Every mention of a historical figure only opened my eyes to how much I didn't learn in history classes I've taken over the years of schooling. Terry Guest does a beautiful job of intertwining the past and present. He name drops familiar events and some not so familiar.

As the cast and I dissected the script there were many epiphanies and realizations of how past and present can reflect each other. The French revolution, Black Lives Matter movement, and the civil rights movement only bring that point home. I took it upon myself to look up more important names relevant to these movements and my heart broke. The number of people whose lives were lost for the sake of a better future really stirs the pot of emotions. What's even more astonishing are the names society won't even learn, unless self-motivated. This show, with all of its richness, has truly empowered my urge to learn more. I hope *Marie Antoinette and the Magical Negroes* inspires audiences to do the same.

Board of Directors

Betty Bruther
Carla Castaño
Marcia Eppich-Harris
Sara Galer
Aric Harris
Mark Harvey Levine
Rod Macrae
Robin Lea Pyle

Terry Guest
About the Playwright

Terry Guest is an award-winning Playwright, Actor, Producer, Poet and Teaching Artist based in. His play At the Wake of a Dead Drag Queen has been workshopped, read and performed all over the country and was the 2018 recipient of Out Front Theatre's Spectrum Series Grant. He is currently a member of the 2020/21 Goodman Theatre Playwrights Unit and is commissioned to write new plays by several other Chicagoland companies. Recently, Terry's play, The Magnolia Ballet, Part One, premiered at the Phoenix Theatre in Indianapolis.

As an actor Terry has worked at regional theaters around the country including Steppenwolf, Goodman Theatre, Alliance Theatre, Actors Express, and others. Terry is a Governing Ensemble Member at The Story Theatre and is signed by DDO Chicago. Inspired by: Whitney Houston, Stephen Sondheim, my grandma in the kitchen, Spike Lee, Tennessee Williams, Black Queer people, Black Women, Bob Mackie costumes, Kerry James Marshall, Liza Minelli and the creativity and resilience of Black people around the world. More information at *www.terrycguest.com*.

THANK YOU TO OUR CORPORATE SPONSORS

creative **solutions**

WEB DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT

4621 Creative Solutions provides rock solid user centered design and interfaces for a variety of companies and organizations!

MOTION GRAPHICS & VIDEO EDITING

4621 videos can be live-action demos, animated tutorials, expert interviews, life style reviews - you name it, we can do it!

PRINT & MARKETING

4621's projects include whitepapers, flyers, case studies, business cards, novels, handouts, and MORE!

EDITING & COPYRIGHTING

4621's services now include editing, copy writing, revising, and anything related to the written word!

WWW.4621CREATIVE.COM | 650.787.4113

SOUTHBANK
THEATRE COMPANY

Marie Antoinette & The Magical Negroes

Terry Guest

Directed by
Kelly Mills

Cast

The Tribe

Jim Crow	Ron Perkins
Sambo	Bra'Jae' Allen
Mammy	Kelli Thomas
Sapphire	Anila Akua
Savage	Tommy Gray, III

The Royalty

Marie Antoinette	Haley Glickman
King Louis XVI	Josh Cornell

Crew and Creative Team

Producer	Marcia Eppich-Harris
Director	Kelly Mills
Original Music Compositions	Fores Liggins (AKA Joe Black Monday)
Stage Manager, Assistant Director, Choregrapher	Syearra Liggins
Set Design	Kristopher D. Steege
Costume Design	Anthony James Sirk
Lighting Design	Pamela Albrecht
Magic Consultant	Taylor Martin
Lightboard Operator	Aric Harris
Sound Design	Syearra Liggins

Content warning: language, adult content, violence
Run Time: 2 hours
There will be a 15 minute intermission.

Actor Bios

Haley Glickman (MARIE ANTOINETTE)

Haley Glickman is a bisexual actress and writer. The playwright specifically states that casting for this show should be "the queerer the better," and Haley likes to think that she lives every day as queer as possible. She's written some things that have been published, she's been acting for over fifteen years, and if you want to know more about that stuff you can visit her website: *www.haleyglickman.com*. Happy Pride Month!

Ron Perkins (JIM CROW)

Ron E.P. (Perk-on-set) is an actor, model, and artist who resides in Indianapolis, IN. He has been a part of self-directed and promoted independent short films and skits over the course of the past four years. He has now bridged his talents into the theater world to grow and enrich himself further amongst other stellar talented individuals. This is his second run with Southbank Theatre, recently appearing in *Twelfth Night* (a Shakespeare musical adaption). He is thankful to hit the stage once again!

Kelli Thomas (MAMMY)

Kelli is currently studying theatre with a concentration in acting at the University of Indianapolis. There she has participated in multiple productions including, *In the Next Room* (Elizabeth), *Drowning Girls* (Bessie), *Taming of the Shrew* (Petruchio), and *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot* (Cunningham). These roles got her nominated for the Irene Ryan Acting Award. Kelli has enjoyed performing long before starting her education at UIndy doing shows at her community theatre, M&M Ross in Merrillville, IN, since 2015.

Tommy Gray, III (SAVAGE)

Tommy is a retired Marine, having served 22 years in the United States Marine Corps. He has lived in countries such as Japan, Philippines, Israel, Greece, Spain, Bahrain, Africa, Ireland, Thailand, Jordan, and more. Tommy's acting experience holds an equal balance in theater and film. He has been a part of plays such as *Her Lies His Secrets part 3, For Colored Girls,* and several shows in the IndyFringe, with Onyx Fest, including a play called *Being Black* which also aired on WFYI Channel 20. His film work includes Department of Corrections women's facility, *Family Ties, Chicago Med, A Bell Family Christmas,* and *For Color Girls.* He is a published author and working with a major publisher to republish his book worldwide to go into every bookstore. He holds an Associate degree in General Studies, Bachelor of Science in Management and a Master of Business Administration, as well as an additional undergraduate certificate in project management. Tommy's goal is to be able to act on the big screen for movies/television and become a *New York Times* bestselling author.

Actor Bios

Bra'Jae' Allen (SAMBO)

Bra'Jae' (Bray-Juh) Allen is an actor from Indianapolis, Indiana where she currently resides. Her passion and love for acting came to her at a time where she was searching for her true purpose and calling. Storytelling and storytelling of the unheard have always been a fierce part of her identity, as she, like many others, feels silent in the masses. Thrilled at the opportunity to change the narrative, Bra'Jae' has enjoyed the unique and unconventional way that has brought this show together. The countless perspectives and outpouring of knowledge has advanced her in more ways than one. From this show, she says, "I hope that you, as an audience, take away that it takes one person to spark a flame, but it's easier to create a fire with a team. Be the change you want to see."

Anila Akua (SAPPHIRE)

Anila Akua is a classically trained actor with over two years of experience. Most recently she could be found playing Toshi in *Mud Row* by Dominque Morisseau. She has also starred in the DP Demarco Plays film *Department of Corrections Women's Division* as the Commissioner by DP Demarco, and Aunt Jackie in the upcoming JP Productions *Bell Family Christmas* by Naim Randolph, William Tyson and Brittany Cherelle. She was an extra in the miniseries *Almost 30*, and *Unequally Yolked*. Anila has trained under the Meisner Method Program. She's done training with Jim Dougherty of Indy Actor's Academy, Tijideen Rowley of the Actor's Café, and Dario A. Lee with TIG Media. She has been increasing her skills with voice lessons and learning improv. Anila serves the community by teaching financial literacy to the youth, volunteering with Indy Reads and Coburn Place Safe Haven.

Josh Cornell (KING LOUIS XVI)

This is Josh's first time working with Southbank Theatre Company and his first time on the Fonseca stage. He previously appeared in Indianapolis as Willie Conklin in Footlite's *Ragtime*. Before moving to Indiana in 2019, Josh acted in shows such as *Rabbit Hole, The Shape of Things, Rent, Hairspray, The Flick, Seussical, Boy,* and many others. He would like to thank his wife and two children for always supporting his passion for acting.

Creative Team

Kelly Mills (DIRECTOR)

Kelly is an Indy native creative. Her early school years are where her passions for the arts were birthed. She shined in school productions such as James Whitcomb Riley's *Little Orphan Annie, The Crucible, West Side Story,* and *Working*, just to name a few. Thanks to Kelly's passion and eagerness to help she has graced the backstage and tech crew for several productions, including but not limited to *Pride and the Prejudice, Price of Progress,* and *Kinky Boots*. Telling stories and creating worlds that inform, provoke, and inspire perspective is her life goal. Being able to share the stage with so many beautiful, talented, and intelligent creatives has nurtured her skills. Kelly has enjoyed performing *Made Man Improv* with Justin Bland, *The Wiz* with KaidyDid productions, *Her Lies His Secrets* with Demarco Plays, and a host of original Vernon Williams productions. She has hopes of traveling the world creating insight through theater. Her family is the biggest motivating factor in her life. Wanda and Andora, her shows are dedicated to you.

Syearra Liggins (STAGE MANAGER, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, CHOREOGRAPHER)

Syearra Liggins was born and raised in Indianapolis, Indiana, into a highly artistic family. As a child she was constantly moving and unable to sit still, so her mother decide to help focus that energy by enrolling her in the dance magnet at Shortridge Middle School. There, she realized her passion and love for the movement arts, dance and theater. She then carried that passion to Broad Ripple High School where she further sculpted her craft, love, and understanding for the arts. After graduating and working as a classroom assistant in the dance magnet at Broad Ripple H.S. for four years, she later attended Columbia College in Chicago as a dance major. In Indiana she has danced and collaborated with, choreographed for, and taught performance arts with various performances art groups such as The Theater of Inclusion, Susurrus, Motus Dance, Kenyette, The NODC, Sacred Ground Dance Company, and Dance East Ballet Academy, to name a few. She continues to be inspired by the beauty and freedom of the arts every day.

Kristopher D. Steege (SET DESIGN)

Kristopher D. Steege is an assistant professor of theatre at Marian University teaching design and technical theatre. He received his B.A. in from South Dakota State University and his M.F.A. in at the University of Wisconsin - Madison. Some of Kristopher's local freelance designs include work for American Lives Theatre, Summer Stock Stage, Booth Tarkington Civic Theatre, University of Indianapolis, and the Indianapolis Children's Museum. Special thanks to his wife Michelle and his sons for supporting him on all his artistic endeavors.

Creative Team

Marcia Eppich-Harris (PRODUCER)

Marcia Eppich-Harris founded Southbank Theatre Company in 2021 and since then has worn many hats for the company, including playwriting, directing, producing, costuming, and much more. She is thrilled to work with such a talented cast and creative team on *Marie Antoinette and the Magical Negroes*. Her play, *The Profession*, will be the first play of Southbank's second season, coming this fall.

Anthony James Sirk (COSTUME DESIGN)

Anthony has been a theatre artist and costume technologist for over two decades, designing and creating costumes internationally and around the United States. His work has been seen in multiple exhibitions in South Korea, the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, *RuPaul's Drag Race*, multiple studio and independent films, as well as regional and summer stock theater companies. In addition to his professional work, Mr. Sirk is committed to creating an inclusive learning process that compassionately fosters new talent in the work he does at the academic level. Recently Tony costume designed Terry Guest's *Magnolia Ballet* at Phoenix Theatre and multiple shows at Fonseca Theatre.

Taylor Martin (MAGIC CONSULTANT)

In the past 15 years if you have seen a magic show in Indianapolis, there is a good chance Taylor Martin might have had something to do with it. From his many shows at the Indy Fringe Festival as Andrea Merlyn, The Queen of Magic, to his many appearances on local TV, to his consulting local theaters about illusion, you can usually find his name in the credits. Taylor has performed the world's oldest performing art form for 62 years. The first 8 years of his life were wasted. Taylor's latest Fringe show for this August is *The Session*. You can follow Taylor on Facebook, Instagram, & Twitter. Don't blink tonight, Magic Is Everywhere.

Pamela Albrecht (LIGHTING DESIGN)

Pamela Albrecht is your friendly neighborhood historian who is ecstatic to be working on this show with Southbank Theatre Company. She is a Marian University graduate (2020) with a ten-year background as a theatre technician with a passion for lighting. She is the technical director for Speedway Senior High School. Her most recent credit is with American Lives Theatre's production of *Oak Island: A New Musical*.

INDY GHOST LIGHT

Dedicated to shining a light on the Indianapolis theatre community through no-cost photography, videography and promotion.

Cook Device Solutions

Chaos Made Simple

Consulting for medical device compliance

- Reference Standards and Regulations
- Engineering Support
- Product Life Cycle

+1 (317) 289-1969

Email: info@cookds.com

http://cookds.com

THE SPEAK EASY

The Speak Easy is a gathering place and a community for idea-stage startups, aspiring founders, freelancers, remote workers, and others who want to plug in.

As Indiana's first co-working space, we build community and remove barriers to entrepreneurship by creating a shared economy of supportive connections, affordable workspace, and know-how.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
www.speakeasyindy.com
info@speakeasyindy.com

5255 North Winthrop Avenue
Indianapolis, Indiana 46220

SOUTHBANK
THEATRE COMPANY

Special Thanks

4621 Creative Solutions and TikiKitchen, Fonseca Theatre, Speak Easy, Tom Alvarez, Shannon Samson, Cook Device Solutions, StoneTree Studios, and Send a Friend Lasagna. To the Board of Southbank Theatre Company: Betty Bruther, Carla Castaño, Sara Galer, Aric Harris, Mark Harvey Levine, Rod Macrae, Robin Lea Pyle, and Latrice Young. To the entire cast and crew of *Marie Antoinette and the Magical Negroes* – a thousand thanks to you, friends.

Thank You to Our Donors

1909 Digital, Kelly Andronicos, Rachel Sahaidachny, Stephanie Eppich Daily, David Molloy, Ashley Eppich, Kate Duffy, Michelle Marti, Judy Eppich, Nick Asher, Yolanda Valdivia, Wendy Brown, Rachel Snyder, Carol Stamile, Megan Jacobs, Sara Galer, Mary Karty, Julie Goodspeed-Chadwick, Terry & Richard Harris, Richard Douglas Harris, Lara Sullivan, Pamela Morgan, Andrew Black, Latrice Young, Rod Macrae, Michelle Wafford, Scott Semester, Natasha Rott, Christine Wolfe, Lauren Taylor, Brandi Underwood, Ashley Sanders, Cornelius Martin, Eric Mannweiler, Craig Harris, and Sreeja Rajasekharan.

Become a Donor Today

Southbank Theatre Company is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt entity.
All donations are tax deductible.
www.southbanktheatre.org/donate-today | info@southbank theatre.org

Tip Jar

If you would like to help us pay our performers, please leave them a tip in our tip jar! Scan the QR code on the left in order to make a donation to the tip jar, and 100% of the donations to the tip jar will be used to pay actors, cast, and crew.

© 2022 Southbank Theatre. All rights reserved. www.southbanktheatre.org