



THE HULA-HOOPIN' QUEEN

February 15 - April 14, 2023

Large Print Program

Imagination Stage

Founding Artistic Director: Janet Stanford

Managing Director: Jason Najjoun

THE HULA-HOOPIN' QUEEN

Based on the book by Thema Lynne Godin

Illustrated by Vanessa Brantley-Newton

Adapted by Gloria Bond Clunie

Co-commissioned by Childsplay (Tempe, AZ), Artistic
Director, Dwayne Hartford

Directed by Angelisa Gillyard

Cast

Tamieka Chavis

Jasmine Joy

Deidra LaWan Starnes

Alana S. Thomas

Renee Elizabeth Wilson

Director's Notes

Striver's Row - the historic district in Harlem, New York City, that spans West 138th Street and West 139th Street between Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Blvd and Frederick Douglass Blvd. Striver's Row has been the home of many highly accomplished African Americans throughout history (some of whom you will hear about in our play and can read about in the lobby). It's no surprise that Kameeka, Jamara and Portia have embraced the spirit of excellence that has long permeated their neighborhood by wanting to be the best. Kameeka and Jamara want to be the best hula hoopers in the neighborhood while Portia wants to be the best flute player.

Wanting to be the best at something is a natural feeling.

We want to feel proud of ourselves for completing a great task. We want to be admired and celebrated by others.

However, we must not forget who we are and those we love dearly in our quest to be the best. True love for our

family, friends and community is the greatest legacy we can leave for our world. Crowns, titles, and accolades will too often be forgotten. Love lasts and gets passed on forever. Kameeka, Jamara and Portia learn this lesson and I hope the audience does too.

About the Director

Angelisa Gillyard is delighted to be making her Imagination Stage debut! Local credits include the Helen Hayes nominated *Once On This Island* (Constellation Theatre Company), *Wanda's Way* and *Mamalogues* (1st Stage). She also co-directed the Helen Hayes nominated *Day of Absence* with Raymond O. Caldwell (Theater Alliance). Her direction and choreography have also been seen at Arena Stage, Studio Theatre, Signature Theatre, Young Playwrights' Theater, Ally Theatre Company, In Series, Freshh Theatre Inc., University of Maryland, Montgomery College and Catholic University. Angelisa has an MBA, PhD, and MFA in directing. For more information visit www.angelisa.net

On the Stage

Tamieka Chavis (Miz Adeline) is delighted for her IStage debut, as well as revisiting one of her favorite childhood activities of hula hooping! Local credits include The Rainmaker, The Mamalogues (1st Stage); A Raisin in the Sun, Macbeth (Broadway World Best Actress in Play), Romeo + Juliet, Henry IV Parts 1 & 2, The Tempest, A Christmas Carol (Chesapeake Shakespeare Company [company member]); Charm, Inherit the Windbag (Mosaic Theatre); Eurydice, Middletown, Love Loss and What I Wore (NextStop Theatre); Company: Caucasian Chalk Circle (Constellation Theatre); Clover, Rabbit Summer (Ally Theatre Company); The Late Wedding (The Hub Theatre); Measure for Measure, Hedda Gabler (BADA); The Revolution Will Be Improvised (u/s) (The Second City); She A Gem (u/s) (The Kennedy Center TYA).

TELEVISION: Anacostia (Daytime Emmy nominated and Indie Series Award recipient for Best Lead Actress), The Wire, Psychic Detectives. FILM: Raven, Liam White, A Family Matters Christmas, Torn. www.tamiekachavis.com

Jasmine Joy (Mama [Mrs. Caroline Hayes]) is thrilled to be returning to Imagination Stage! Local credits include Dance Nation (Olney Theater Center), The Mamalogues (1st Stage), Corduroy (Imagination Stage). A Chorus Within Her (Theater Alliance), A Wind In the Door U/S (The Kennedy Center TYA), Moon Man Walk (Constellation Theatre), The Snow Queen (Imagination Stage), Womxn's Fire Festival (The Keegan Theatre), The Gulf (Peter's Alley), Powers that Be (Venus Theatre), #solestories (Venus Theatre). You can stay updated on Jasmine's projects by visiting her website www.JasmineJoyBrooks.com. Jasmine graduated from Salisbury University with degrees in Theatre and Communications Media Studies.

Deidra LaWan Starnes (Miss Evelyn) was last seen at IStage 23 years ago in Talking Eggs. She has appeared at regional theatres such as Huntington, New Federal, 1st Stage, Shakespeare Theatre Company, Folger, Olney, Studio, Constellation, Rep Stage, Everyman, and African Continuum. Shows include Mlima's Tale, The Mamalogues, The Member of the Wedding, The Amen

Corner, Amadeus, Julius Caesar, King Lear, Invisible Man, Passing Strange, In the Red and Brown Water, Radio Golf, The Old Settler, Seven Guitars, Intimate Apparel, A Raisin in the Sun, Gingham Dog, I Have Before Me a Remarkable Document... , Two Trains Running, Spunk, Doubt, Stuff Happens.

Kalen Robinson (Kameeka Sankofa Hayes) is excited to make her Imagination Stage debut! Her regional credits include: Once on This Island (Constellation Theatre), Cinderella, 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee (Fulton Theatre), Elf: The Musical, Grease, Rocky: The Musical (Toby's Dinner Theatre), Spring Awakening (Round House Theatre). She received her BFA in Musical Theatre from Howard University in 2020. She credits her success to God and her endlessly supportive village of family and friends who believe in her! Instagram:

@k_nicole143

Alana Thomas (Portia Maria Johnson/Dance Captain) is ecstatic to be back at Imagination Stage! LOCAL: Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed: The Rock Experience, P.Nokio (Imagination Stage), Fame (GALA Hispanic

Theatre), Little Shop of Horrors -HH nom- (Constellation Theatre Company). NEW YORK CITY: Welcome To The Doll Den (Electric Eye Company), Ragtime (Gallery Players). REGIONAL: In The Heights, The Color Purple, The Producers (Virginia Repertory Theatre), Legally Blonde: The Musical (Riverside Dinner Theatre). TOUR: 50th Anniversary of Woodstock: The Summer Of Love.
@AlanaBeSaiyan

Renee Elizabeth Wilson (Anita "Jamara" Washington)

is thrilled to be making her Imagination Stage debut!
Selected DC theatre credits to include: Intimate Apparel (Theater J); Moon Man Walk (Constellation Theatre Company); Nollywood Dreams U/S & performed (Roundhouse Theatre); Native Son and Milk Like Sugar (Mosaic Theatre Company); Seven Guitars U/S (Arena Stage); Aint No Mo U/S & performed (Woolly Mammoth Theater); Skeleton Crew U/S & Performed (Studio Theatre); and Nell Gwynn U/S (Folger Theater). She is a graduate of The Duke Ellington School of the Arts and has a BFA in Drama from NYU Tisch School of the Arts.
Renee would like to thank her mom, Hattie Mae, who

instilled in her a love of movement and play. Instagram:
@actpoetic88 and @bodied_by_renee

Behind the Scenes

Phoenix Cross (Understudy Mama, Adeline, Evelyn) is an American born actor working and living in the DMV area. Phoenix has worked in local and International theatre for the past 20 years. Phoenix has been a member of “Quest: Arts for Everyone”; a traveling visual theatre company, consisting of Deaf, Hard of Hearing and hearing performers. Phoenix’s local credits include Dracula: A Feminist Revenge Fantasy, Really (Rorschach Theatre), Chemical Exile(Rorschach Theatre), Pride and Prejudice(CMT) Tartuffe (CMT). Film credits include The Walking Dead: World Beyond (AMC), Le Maudis (YouTube), and Bullet (Collaborative Efforts Production). Phoenix is excited to be Understudying for Imagination Stage again! Phoenix would like to thank her family and friends for their love and support.

Ashley K. Nicholas (Understudy Kameeka, Jamara, Portia) is grateful to be returning to Imagination Stage

after appearing in both the original and remount productions of *The Princess & The Pauper - A Bollywood Tale*. Favorite credits include: *Fantastagirl and The Math Monster* (ATMTC), *Three Little Birds* (nat'l tour); *Alix in Wonderland* (staged reading), *Parade* (Keegan Theatre); *Aida* (Constellation Theatre); *Montgomery* (staged reading), *Brooklyn* (Monumental Theatre); *Dreamgirls*, *Sister Act* (Toby's Dinner Theatre); *Caroline, or Change* (Creative Cauldron). EDUCATION: Point Park University. Ashley K. would like to thank IStage for this experience. As always, immense love to her family, friends, and partners. IG: @ashleykatina

Natsu Onoda Power (Scenic Design) and Imagination Stage go together like double fudge chocolate cake and real whipped cream! Previous IStage credits include *Thumbelina* (adapter/ director), *Anime Momotaro* (set design) and *Sinbad: the Untold Tale* (set design). DC theater community has been her artistic home for the past 17 years. She is a Professor of Theater and Performance Studies at Georgetown University.

Pauline Lamb (Props Design)

John D. Alexander (Lighting Design) (He/Him)

IMAGINATION STAGE: Mother Goose and 10 Seconds.

OFF-BROADWAY: Lambs 2 Slaughter, Migration:

Reflections on Jacob Lawrence. DC AREA: Top

dog/Underdog (Helen Hayes Nomination), Selling Kabul,

Daphne's Dive, This Bitter Earth, Fabulation or the

Re-Education of Undine, Marie and Rosetta, Ma Rainey's

Black Bottom, Airness, Darius and Twig, Black Nativity,

Disgraced, HERstory, Black Berry Winter, The Gospel at

Colonus, Happiness (and Other Reasons to Die), King

Lear, Broke-ology, American Moor, Anne and Emmett

(National and European Tour). REGIONAL: From the

Mississippi Delta, Detroit '67, Crying on Television,

Quamino's Map, B.R.O.K.E.N. Code B.I.R.D. Switching,

Paradise Blue, Skeleton Crew, Royale, The Snowy Day

and Other Stories. TV: PBS: No Child.UPCOMING: One in

two. EDUCATION: University of North Carolina School of

the Arts: BFA in Lighting Design.

www.johndalexanderlightingdesign.com.

Kevin Lee Alexander (Sound Design) is excited to join

Imagination Stage on this production of The Hula Hoopin'

Queen. Recent regional credits include Acoustic Rooster's

Barnyard Boogie (Kennedy Center's Theatre for Young Audiences); Once on this Island (Constellation Theatre); Hair: The American Tribal Love-Rock Musical and Oliver (New Repertory Theatre); Day of Absence (Theater Alliance); Huckleberry Finn's Big River (Adventure Theatre MTC); Bright Star (Lyric Theatre of Oklahoma); and Step Afrika's The Migration: Reflections of Jacob Lawrence (National Tour). Kevin holds a Master of Science in Entertainment Business from Full Sail University, and a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre from the University of Maryland. He is also a member of IATSE Local USA 829.

Alexis Chaney (Costume Design) is a LA-based costume designer and social justice warrior. Recent and upcoming film , television and theatrical credits include A Place of Bones (Goldrush Entertainment), Legacies Season 4 (Warner Brothers) What to Send Up When It Goes Down (Congo Square Theater) Untitled Baby Play (IAMA Theater). She has a MFA in Costume Design from Carnegie Mellon University and is a proud founding member of First Floor Theater in Chicago. You can find her work at alexiscarrie.com

Luís Ramon Córdovez (Stage Manager) is a DMV Based Taíno Stage Manager/Actor, who is very excited to make their Imagination Stage Debut! They are grateful for the opportunity to share space and create art with so many spectacular artists of the global majority. These stories are the kind they wished for as a child and it truly means the world. Recent Credits: Day You Begin U/S (Kennedy Center); Once on this Island ASM (Constellation Theatre); Tick Tick Boom PSM (Monumental Theatre Co.) They'd like to dedicate a few words to one of their greatest supporters: Nanichi' Cameron, uara' da eracra, roco zi da asu.

Production Staff

Music Director/Consultant: Roz White

Hula-Hooping Coach: Latif Schofield

Deck Captain: Paige Willis

Sound Board Operator: Courtney Naughton

Costume Supervisor: Cheyenne Hill

Costume Supervisor: Sandy Duraes

Land Acknowledgement

Imagination Stage acknowledges that the land on which our theatre home sits was, and is still, inhabited and cared for by the Piscataway Conoy and Piscataway tribes.

We are grateful for their past and continued stewardship of this land. The Piscataway and Piscataway Conoy tribes, especially their children, have powerful voices that have often been silenced throughout history.

2023 Summer Camps available now!

Up Next in our season: Nate the Great

June 21- August 11, 2023

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please visit our website at www.imaginationstage.org