

FIRES IN

THE MIRROR

CROWN HEIGHTS, BROOKLYN
AND OTHER IDENTITIES

————— A CONTEMPORARY CLASSIC

BY ANNA DEAVERE SMITH • DIRECTED BY NICOLE BREWER
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH LONG WHARF THEATRE



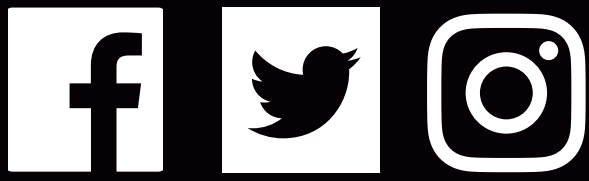
BALTIMORE
CENTER
STAGE

NOV 27- DEC 19, 2021

#FIRESINTHEMIRROR
#BCSFIRESINTHEMIRROR
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Honor Native Land

Responding to a call from our Indigenous colleagues, collaborators, and neighbors, Baltimore Center Stage is working toward building meaningful and accountable relationships with the land we occupy. As a first step on this path, you'll see a land acknowledgement in each of our programs. Acknowledgment is itself a small gesture, and we look forward to continuing our efforts toward decolonization in a good way. If you're interested in more information about the practice of land acknowledgement, feel free to visit the US Department of Arts and Culture's "Honor Native Land" guide.

Baltimore Center Stage acknowledges that the land beneath us, this place, this community, owes its vitality to generations who have come before. Some were brought forcibly to this land, some came here in search of ownership or simply a better life, and some have lived and stewarded this land for countless generations. In a spirit of making erased histories visible, we acknowledge that we are standing on the ancestral and occupied lands of the Piscataway Nation. The Susquehannock, Lenape, and Lumbee peoples have also cared for this land. These peoples are not relics of the past, but they continue to steward this land today with care, vitality, and tradition. Their relations are numerous throughout Turtle Island, and they are continuing to grow. We pay respects to their elders past, present, and future. Please take a moment to consider the many legacies of violence, displacement, migration, and settlement that bring us together here today. And please join us in uncovering such truths at any and all public events.

Additionally in the spirit of reconciliation, you can honor the Indigenous peoples of this land by donating to Native American Lifelines, donating to or visiting the Baltimore American Indian Center & Heritage Museum, and supporting local Indigenous artists. These are only a few suggestions of the many ways we can move towards reconciliation.



Dear BCS Members and Guests,

When putting together this season, one of the first places I looked was to my theatrical heroes—those artists whose storytelling has changed our industry and has changed me personally. Top among these theatrical gamechangers is Anna Deavere Smith and her groundbreaking play *Fires in the Mirror*.

This contemporary classic is both expansively timeless and incisively specific. Chronicling a period of unrest in Crown Heights in 1991, Anna Deavere Smith weaves real life accounts into a sweeping narrative of identity, generational trauma, and cultural divide. Since its premiere Off-Broadway in 1992, the impact of *Fires in the Mirror* still ripples across the theater world—both in its innovative form as a documentary play composed entirely of interviews that Smith conducted herself, and also in her refusal to back down from tremendously difficult and complicated topics. Almost thirty years later, this play resonates as strongly as ever, offering an important and timely invitation to heal and to love through difference.

To tell this story, you have to have a massive amount of care and sophistication—not just about the craft of theater but also about the historical context and how it affects our world today. And so there is nobody else we wanted to have at the helm of this show more than Nicole Brewer, who brings her extensive experience as a director, facilitator, and educator to bear on this piece. I am in awe of her work, of the performances by this cast of theatrical chameleons, and of the incredible visions of this design team. Everyone who touched this show brought their whole selves to each step of this process, and it has been an honor to witness that collaboration and artistry. I am thrilled to be able to share the medicine that is *Fires in the Mirror* with you today.

Stephanie Ybarra
Artistic Director



What happened in Crown Heights thirty years ago, exists in the 'rememory' of it, to use a word coined by Toni Morrison, as a harbinger to our present.

When I look beyond the tragedy of the lives lost on August 19, 1991 it's clear the repetitive pattern of oppression in which all our lives hinge. How do we disrupt a society and culture which was formed and maintained to capitalize and weaponize our differences? *Fires* offers us the opportunity to practice the art of witnessing, that when done well, places us in a posture of listening. That listening is not just to others but what our bodies are telling us about what we need for our own healing.

The work of transformation, the work of right relationship requires our attention and commitment to listen beyond our fear, our pain, our loss, our grief, our rage. It requires us to keep looking at ourselves, communities and at those who are not like us. We do this to begin to see and feel our mental barriers which prevent us from forming genuine connections across differences.

The work of collective healing begins with individuals like yourself, for we all have work to do-*though not the same work*, to disrupt the conditions and systems that would deny our liberation. And if we can do that, give ourselves permission to heal, *Fires* perhaps reaches its goal to become a play which is no longer relevant precisely because we heeded its call.

To my parents and children I love you. Your support allows me to practice my heart's work. My deepest gratitude to all the humans, including audience, donors, community activists, BCS staff, the show's designers, actors, and stage management team all of whom generously tithed their time, talent and artistry into this production. *Thank you!*

Nicole Brewer
Director

FIRES IN THE MIRROR: CROWN HEIGHTS, BROOKLYN AND OTHER IDENTITIES

CONCEIVED, WRITTEN AND ORIGINALLY PERFORMED
BY ANNA DEAVERE SMITH

ORIGINAL NEW YORK PRODUCTION
BY NEW YORK SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

FIRES IN THE MIRROR: CROWN HEIGHTS, BROOKLYN AND OTHER IDENTITIES
IS PRESENTED BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT WITH
DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE, INC., NEW YORK.

NOV 27 - DEC 19, 2021

CAST

Alternating Performances

Khanisha Foster

Cloteal L. Horne

CONTENT TRANSPARENCY:

Fires in the Mirror catalogs reflections of the Crown Heights Riots, a racially-charged conflict that engulfed the New York neighborhood in 1991. This play contains strong language and references to racism, slavery, lynching, antisemitism, sexual violence, and the Holocaust.

THE CREATIVE TEAM

Anna Deavere Smith
PLAYWRIGHT

Nicole Brewer
DIRECTOR

Diggle
SCENIC DESIGNER

Mika Eubanks
COSTUME DESIGNER

Porsche McGovern
LIGHTING DESIGNER

UptownWorks with Bailey
Trierweiler, Daniela Hart &
Noel Nichols
SOUND DESIGN AND
ORIGINAL MUSIC

Camilla Tassi
PROJECTION DESIGNER

Norman Anthony Small
STAGE MANAGER

Grace Chariya
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Raecine Singletary
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Rodrigo Hernandez Martinez
ASSISTANT SCENIC DESIGNER

Allison Esannason
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Amanda Greene

Remembering the Crown Heights Riots, 30 Years Later

BY ANNALISA DIAS AND ESTRELLITA BEATRIZ

In *Fires in the Mirror*, we hear a wide array of first-hand accounts of events that took place between three days in August 1991 in the Crown Heights neighborhood of Brooklyn, NY. Part of the complexity of the play lies in the conflicting accounts about what happened and differing interpretations about why tensions erupted into violence. Below is a timeline of key moments we hear about in the play.



TIMELINE OF EVENTS

AUGUST 19, 1991 (around 8pm) - car crash involving a car driven by Yosef Lifsh which results in the death of seven year old Gavin Cato, the son of Guyanese immigrants, who was fixing his bike on the sidewalk.

AUGUST 19, 1991 (later) - crowds and rumors grow, opinions and mourning erupts into violence

AUGUST 19, 1991 (around 11pm) - Yankel Rosenbaum, a twenty-nine year old Jewish university student is stabbed and beaten by a group of young Black men, resulting in his death later that night in the hospital.

AUGUST 20-22, 1991 - three days of clashing opinions, public violence, and protest, including communities from

outside the neighborhood and leaders like Rev. Al Sharpton and Sonny Carson.

AUGUST 22, 1991 - over 1500 police officers dispatched to stop the attacks on people and property

BY THE END, 66 civilians and 168 police officers were injured and 163 people were arrested. Crown Heights to this day still remembers and is working through the violence that roiled the neighborhood.

Anna Deavere Smith interviewed the people we hear in the play and wrote *Fires in the Mirror* very shortly after the events took place and it premiered just nine months later in May 1992 at The Public Theater in New York. She is widely considered one of the key figures in the verbatim theatre which is a particular style of documentary theatre that relies on interview transcripts, recordings, court proceedings or other texts, that are arranged into a performance piece where they are performed verbatim, exactly as spoken.



30 years later, *Fires in the Mirror* gives us the opportunity to reflect on how much has changed since August 1991 and yet how much remains the same. It's up to each of us to draw our own conclusions about how to move toward healing and create communities of belonging.



KHANISHA FOSTER

Khanisha was in Penumbra Theatre's *for colored girls...* as Lady in Blue. Her solo show *Joy Rebel*, directed by Obie Award winner Lou Bellamy, received critical acclaim. It was chosen as a DC Metro Staff favorite for 2019. Foster was a featured storyteller on NPR's *The Dinner Party*. Along with Lena Waithe, she was named one of *18 Black Women We Think Are Phenomenal* by *Mater Mea Magazine*. *American Theatre Magazine* named her one of the *6 Theatre Workers You Should Know*. *Broadway World* named her Best Director for *The Bluest Eye*. She's a 2017 Fox Fellow for Actors of Extraordinary Potential.



CLOTEAL L. HORNE

My name **CLOTEAL L. HORNE** (*Her/She*), aptly weaves together parts of my grandparents names. Be it to muster the courage to stand before witnesses onstage or on screen, as a raw nerve, in order to shine a light upon hidden parts of humanity, or to architect a world that ignites the imagination towards transformation—I am committed to collaborative processes that illuminate humanity through the craft of storytelling.

My work uproots classics and tethers itself to immersive ceremonies and rituals that center blackness, black-femininity. Calling on both the sacred and profane to locate that small (sometimes quiet) place where healing happens. I dedicate my practice to community, honest liberation, and building more just and joyous futures. Blissfully standing on the shoulders of those that come before me, I am a product of my grandmother's prayers + my ancestors' wildest dreams. Glory be. MFA Acting- Brown University/Trinity Rep. BFA Theater Arts- Boston University

www.ClotealHorne.com



ANNA DEAVERE SMITH Playwright

Anna Deavere Smith is an actress and playwright who is said to have created a new form of theatre. In popular culture as an actress—*Nurse Jackie*, *Blackish*, *Madame Secretary*, *The West Wing*, *The American President*, *Rachel Getting Married*, *Philadelphia*, others. Books: *Letters to a Young Artist* and *Talk to Me: Listening Between the Lines*. She has created more than person shows based on hundreds of interviews. The best known of those are *Fires in The Mirror*, *Twilight: Los Angeles*, and *Let Me Down Easy*. *Fires* and *Twilight* look at US race relations. The latter deals with health care. They were all performed in US regional theaters, and *Twilight* was on Broadway. Her current project *Notes From the Field: Doing Time In Education*, looks at what is now called the “school to prison pipeline”—disciplinary practices in schools in poor communities that increase the likelihood that those youths will spend part of their lives incarcerated. Three of her plays have been broadcast on PBS.

The National Endowment named her the 2015 Jefferson Lecturer for the Humanities. The lecture is the highest honor the government confers for distinguished intellectual achievement in the humanities. Prizes include the National Humanities Medal presented by President Obama, a MacArthur fellowship, the Dorothy and Lillian Gish Award, two Tony nominations, and two Obies. She was runner-up for the Pulitzer Prize for her play *Fires in the Mirror*. She has received several honorary degrees. She is founder and director of the [Institute on the Arts and Civic Dialogue](#) at New York University.

NICOLE BREWER

Director

Pronouns: *she/her*

One sentence introduction: *Nicole is an antiracist cultural worker who uses theater to strengthen connections across differences to foster healing, joy and liberation.*

Selected Theatre Credits Elsewhere:

Kamala WAM, Milk Like Sugar

St. Louis Black Rep, Songs For A New World
Sheridan College, Ties that Bind Catholic
University, Jonkonnu Howard University

Creative inspiration: The complexity of the constant-chaotic-convex-concave-consciousness called life.

Community Engagement/Activist work:

Facilitator of Anti-Racist Theatre Trainings.

Awards/proudest achievements: I'm most proud of being a caregiver to some extraordinary children.

Final word: *What comes next in the entertainment industry is up to us...I'm encouraged this time we may get it right.*

DIGGLE

Scenic Designer

is a proud Gay Mexican-Latinx designer.

Selected NYC credits include: *Shakespeare Call & Response* (The Public Mobile Unit), *The Conversationalists* (Bushwick Starr), *Cowboy Bob* (NAMT), *Decky Does A Bronco* (Royal Family), *So Long Boulder City* (SubCulture), *Red Emma & The Mad Monk* (Tank/ANT Fest)

Regional & International: *Electra, Fade* (Dallas Theater Center); *10 Out Of 12* (Undermain Theatre); *Why Do You Stand There In The Rain?* (Edinburgh Fringe/Scotland Tour). Current Projects: *Monstersongs* (TheaterWorks Hartford).

Associate Scenic Design credits include work for Clint Ramos, Dede Ayite, & Rachel Hauck.

Broadway Associate Scenic Designs: *Slave Play*

(Golden & August Wilson) & *Grand Horizons* (Hayes). www.diggledesigns.com

MIKA EUBANKS
Costume Designer

Currently in New York, but hailing from Maryland, received her MFA in Costume Design at Yale School of Drama where she has designed *Death of Yazdgerd* and *Tent Revival*. Other work includes *Revolt. She Said. Revolt Again.*, *In the Red and Brown Water*, *School girls*; or *The African Mean Girls Play*, *The Purple Flower* (Yale Cabaret); *Feeding Beatrice* (Repertory Theatre of St. Louis); *Harry and the Thief* (Strand Theater); *King Lear* starring Andre De Shields (St. Louis Shakespeare Festival); and *Seize The King* (Classical Theater of Harlem). Mika has worked at Center Stage, the Hippodrome, and Morgan State University. In Film she has designed costumes for short films like *Candace* and The Hulu mini series *Initiative 29*. In awards she earned the Leo Lerman Graduate Fellowship in 2019, the Jada Pinkett Smith Applied Arts Award in 2015, and holds a BFA from Maryland Institute College of Art. In Spring 2019 she designed *Twelfth Night* at the Yale Repertory Theatre, for which she received the Connecticut Critic Circle Award for outstanding costume design. Web site: mikaeubanks.com

PORSCHÉ MCGOVERN
Lighting Designer

Porsche McGovern designed *The West End* (Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park), *Skeleton Crew* and *We Are Proud to Present...* (Playmakers Repertory Company), *The Thanksgiving Play* (Repertory Theatre of St. Louis), and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival). She has an MFA from California Institute for the Arts and a BA from St. Lawrence University.

Porsche McGovern is the author of the Howlround series, “Who Designs & Directs in LORT Theatres by Pronoun”. She is a frequent panelist, speaker, and facilitator at regional and national events for conversations on diversity and social justice in theatre.

**UPTOWNWORKS WITH
BAILEY TRIERWEILER,
DANIELA HART & NOEL NICHOLS**
Sound Design and Original Music

Bailey Trierweiler is a non-binary, East-Coast based sound designer, engineer and artist. Bailey works as a Sound Associate with UptownWorks NYC and they are most interested in uplifting marginalized voices and engaging community through thoughtful collaboration and various forms of media. BFA from University of Colorado Boulder, MFA Candidate at Yale School of Drama.

Daniela Hart is a New York City based sound designer and composer currently completing an MFA in Sound Design at the Yale School of Drama. Selected theatre credits include *already there* (Kennedy Center), *Vapor Trail* (MIT), *How to Save the World in 90 Minutes* (Cherry Lane); *Mr. Burns* (Yale); *References to Salvador Dali...* (Harvard Radcliffe at ART); *Julius Caesar*, *Neighborhood 3*, *Must Wash Hands* (Rattlestick Theater); *References* (Harvard Radcliffe at ART); *The Parlour* (Soho Rep). She has also music directed with La Mama and Brooklyn College and produces, directs and edits with her company www.UptownWorksNYC.com.

Noel Nichols is a Sound Designer and Engineer based in the New York area. This is their first production with Baltimore Center Stage, and are thrilled to be part of this highly sensitive team. Local credits include: *I Hate it Here* (Studio Theatre, Recordist), *already there* (Kennedy Center, Assoc. Sound Design). Select design credits include: *ain't no dead thing*, *We are Proud to Present a Presentation...*, (Yale Cabaret); *The*

Masses are Asses (Wesleyan CFA), *Fun Home*, *In His Hands* (Yale School of Drama), *Latinos Who Look Like Ricky Martin* (Verano Cabaret); *Ghost Card* (Fullstop Collective); *Counting Pebbles* (Faultline Ensemble).

CAMILLA TASSI

Projection Designer

Camilla Tassi is a projection designer and musician from Florence, Italy. Design credits include *Stinney: An American Execution* (PROTOTYPE, NYC), *Fun Home* (Yale School of Drama), *O Jerusalem & L'Orfeo* (Apollo's Fire tour), *The Fall of the House of Usher* (MASS MoCA), *The Magic Flute* (Berlin Opera Academy), *The Rules* (Yale Cabaret), as well as video design for the Washington Chorus, Les Délices, Nasty Women Connecticut, and Chicago Ear Taxi. She holds degrees in computer science and music from the University of Notre Dame, an MA in Digital Musics from Dartmouth College, and is an MFA candidate at Yale. camillatassi.com

NORMAN ANTHONY SMALL

Stage Manager

Baltimore Center Stage: *A Play for the Living in a Time of Extinction*, *Where We Stand*. **Off-Broadway**—Keen Company: *Adventurephile*, *All We Need Is Us*, *Digging in the Dark*; WP Theater: *Where We Stand*; Atlantic Theater Company: *Halfway Bitches Go Straight to Heaven*; The Public Theater: *A Night of Wild Beauty* (Ntozake Shange Tribute). **New York Theater**—Harlem Shakespeare Festival: *Othello: The Moor of Venice*; New Heritage Theatre Group: *The Sable Series: The History of Black Shakespearean Actors*; Take Wing and Soar Productions: *King Lear*. **Tour**—Apollo Theater/Baltimore Center Stage: *Twisted Melodies*; National Public Radio (NPR): *Water ±*. **Regional**—Crossroads Theatre Company: *Emergency*; Shakespeare & Company: *Measure for Measure*, *Art*; Berkshire Playwrights Lab: *Some Old Black Man*;

Passage Theatre Company: *Illuminating Spirits*. **Education**—MBA: Metropolitan College of New York (Media Management); BM: University of Miami (Music Engineering Technology). **Award**—Charlie Blackwell Symposium Scholarship for Stage Managers of Color. Member of Actors' Equity Association. Norman would like to dedicate his work on this production to his stage management mentors—Debra Ann Byrd, Jana Lynn, and John Eric Scutchins.

X CASTING

Victor Vazquez (he/him), CSA is a Casting Director in New York City. He is the founder of X Casting (xcastingnyc.com) and sits on the national board of the Casting Society of America. He is the son of Mexican immigrants.

RACHEL FINLEY

Accent Coach

Rachel Finley is an accent coach, intimacy coordinator, director, actor, and Arizona State University professor who earned her BFA at Carnegie Mellon University and her MFA at Florida Atlantic University. Professor Finley is certified in Fitzmaurice Voicework and Knight Thompson Speechwork. Her work, which includes theatre, performance art, spoken word poetry, film, video games and new media has appeared on stages, in studios and on sets from Miami to Los Angeles and Canada to New Zealand. In the last few months, Rachel has worked on productions for NYC based ANDTheatre Co, Miami based Zoetic Stage, Netflix, Xbox Studios, and several indie film and theatre companies.

LONG WHARF THEATRE

Established in 1965 at the start of the regional theatre movement, Long Wharf Theatre was born on the notion that New Haven deserves an active arts culture that is locally created. Our founders shared the dream of starting a professional theatre company in Connecticut, built with the aid of community leaders and patrons of the arts. We are a theatre of international renown, recognized for a historic commitment to commissioning, developing, and producing new work.



Baltimore Center Stage operates under an agreement between LORT and Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.



The Director and/or Choreographer is a member of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers, Inc., an independent national labor union.



The scenic, costume, lighting, and sound designers in LORT theaters are represented by United Scenic Artists, Local USA-829 of the IATSE.

All the Actors and Stage Managers employed in this production are Members of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

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Tish Nigunim (trad., arr Joel Rubin, GEMA)
Beregovski's Khasene (Beregovski's Wedding):
Forgotten Instrumental Treasures from the Ukraine
Schott Music & Media/Wergo SM 1614-2, 1997
www.wergo.de

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+ In Memoriam

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MAR 17-APR 10, 2022

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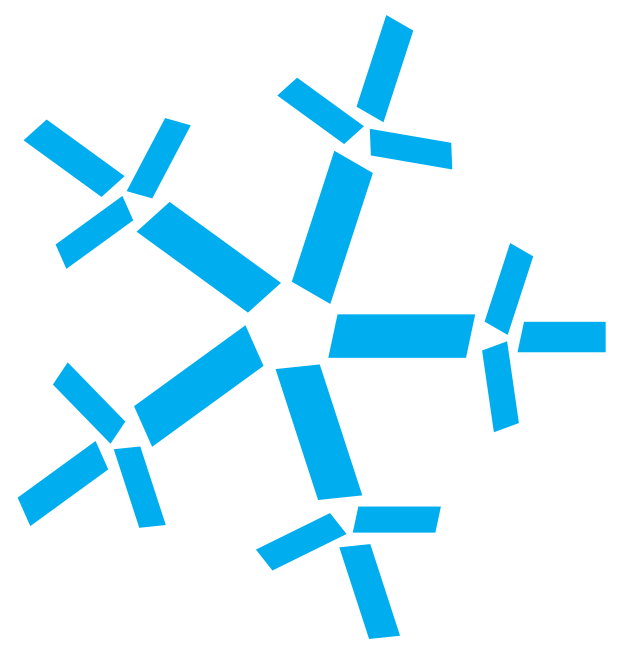
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