



MIRRORS

a world premiere play
by Azure D. Osborne-Lee

Shatter the past, uncover the future.

Directed by Ludovica Villar-Hauser

February 29th - March 22nd, 2020

83 East 4th Street, NYC

(Between Bowery and 2nd Ave)

Buy tickets at nytw.org/show/mirrors

parityproductions.org

parity
productions

Co-produced by
India Blake / IB Productions
Cecelia Joyce Johnson /
Deep End Productions

**NEXT
DOOR
@NYTW**

FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

A covered mirror. Mourning. Expelling our personal phantoms. These are what initially caused Azure D. Osborne-Lee to write their beautiful play *Mirrors*.

Azure is a dazzling new force in the playwriting community, and New York Theatre Workshop has recognized this, too. We are so pleased that the World Premiere of *Mirrors* is happening at Next Door at New York Theatre Workshop.

Our story begins in the fictional town of Etheridge, Mississippi in the summer of 1960 with Bird – a Black, queer woman (and the town pariah) who is mourning the death of her former love, Belle, and attempting to bond with Belle’s 17-year-old daughter, Alma Jean, who is now Bird’s ward.

Though it began with an exploration of death rituals, *Mirrors* has become a work about the importance of love in the face of grief. And while it is funny and spiritual, it also is an unsparing reminder as to what happens when a larger community deems someone “unacceptable.” Unfair judgments. Isolation. Violence. Discrimination and prejudice at all levels of society are far worse for LGBTQ+ Americans of color.

Mirrors is a personal story about death and life in the American South, but it’s also a poignant contribution to the ongoing conversation on social and racial justice, and about the love we find for ourselves and each other when we have the courage to look.

At its heart, *Mirrors* reminds us of the importance of family and community.

- Ludovica Villar-Hauser, Founder and Artistic Director of Parity Productions

SYNOPSIS



Parity Productions Awards Ceremony & Celebration, October 16, 2019 at Theaterlab. Pictured (left to right): Ashley Noel Jones as “Alma Jean Pierson” and Suzanne Darrell as “Bird.” Photography by John Quilty.

Set in the sleepy Mississippi town of Etheridge in the summer of 1960, *Mirrors* depicts the lives of three African-American women bound by love and loss and family, and the secrets of their shared past. When 17-year-old Alma Jean finds her mother dead, she must pack up her life and move in with her mother’s ex-lover, a woman she doesn’t know. Her new guardian, Bird Wilson, is the town pariah and unused to sharing her home. Will mourning the death of a shared loved one bring Alma Jean and Bird together or push them further apart?

THE CAST



Joyia D. Bradley (she/her) (Louise Sterling) is happy to join the cast of *Mirrors* again. Recently, she finished production on *Son* (feature), EBP's workshop production of *&Cressidye* based on Chaucer's *Troilus and Cressida* (Pandarus) and Sextant Productions *The Potemkin Play* (Interrogation Officer). She is gearing up for her first directorial feature, *Rex Unplugged*, based on *Oedipus Rex*.



Suzanne Darrell (she/her) (Bird Wilson) is a later in life MFA actor graduate from Pace University and a classically trained Contralto. She is thrilled to be working on *Mirrors* with the Parity Productions team. Her stage credits include Katori Hall's *Children of Killers* (Mama), *Finding Home* (Nattie) at the Billie Holiday, and the Obie Award-winning Harlem 9's *48 Hours in Harlem C3's - Where the Sun Don't Shine*, inspired by *A Raisin in the Sun* (Mother). A native of Bermuda, she dedicates this performance to her daughter, Cedar. SuzanneDarrell.com



Anthony Goss (he/him) (Ray Johnson) is from Boston, Massachusetts. He studied acting at the Stella Adler studio of acting and Susan Batson studios in New York. He has appeared in productions throughout New York City and currently tours with the hit Off-Broadway play *Black Angels Over Tuskegee*. He looks forward to this next journey with *Mirrors* and is excited to be working with a wonderful cast and team! Follow him @antgoss for upcoming film/TV work.



AnJu Hyppolite (she/her) (Mabel Mosley) (Mabel Mosley) Next Door at NYTW: Debut. Off-Broadway: *The Johnsons* (Michael), *Rent Party* (Jenny), *The Passage* (Revolutionary/Runaway), *Rebelliousness* (Cherry Turner), *Speechless* (Deviser/Lila/Puppeteer). Select Regional: *Intimate Apparel* (Mayme, Arty Award nominee), *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Calpurnia, Arty Award recipient), *Mama Won't Fly* (Essie/Aunt Ardale/Kiki, Shellie Award nominee), *Penthesilea* (Prothoe), *The Color Purple* (Olivia/Ensemble), *Agamemnon* (Cassandra), *Fortinbras* (Horatio). Hats off to this talented cast and crew! Let's connect: @anjuhypolite



Natalie Jacobs (she/her) (Constance Jenkins) is a former Division 1 All-American athlete who hails from Virginia. After training at Studio Theatre in Washington DC, she relocated to New York City. She can be seen in various TV projects including the Emmy-nominated series *Tough Love*, and the current ABC drama series *For Life*. She is thankful to be a part of *Mirrors* with teammates who she now considers friends. Follow her artistic journey on IMDB and her life outside the arts on @Natty.Jae on Instagram.



Kayland Jordan (she/her) (Anabelle "Belle" Pierson) is a recent graduate of the BFA Acting program at Pace University School of Performing Arts. Her most recent onscreen credits are *Emergence* (ABC) and *Betty* (HBO). Some of her previous stage credits include poetic play *For Colored Girls When The Rainbow is Enuf* at The People's Forum and award-winning original play *Fancy Maids* produced by Ken Davenport's Rave Festival.



Ashley Noel Jones (she/her) (Alma Jean Pierson) is an actor/musician and graduate of NYU's Tisch School. FILM: *Anomaly*; *Storm Before The Quiet*; Grammy-nominated James Bay's album/short film *Electric Light*; *Limetown*, Season 2. THEATER: The Public, A.R.T./NY, Williamstown, Corkscrew Festival, NOLA Project. MUSIC: Mercury Lounge, World Cafe Live, Rockwood, featured by Instagram, AirBNB, Hilton Hotels. Social media: @noelashley

THE TEAM



Azure D. Osborne-Lee (he/him, they/them) (Playwright)

is an award-winning Black queer theatre maker whose work has been produced and/or developed by Parity Productions, Trans Lab @ The Public and WP, The Tank, The Flea Theater, BAX|Brooklyn Arts Exchange, BAM, JACK, Rising Circle Theater Collective, The Fire This Time Festival, Horse Trade Theater Group, The Castillo Theatre, The New Ohio Theatre, National Black Theatre, Freedom Train Productions, Downtown Urban Arts Festival, Lambda Literary Foundation, The Helix Queer Performance Network, and regionally.

azureosbornelee.com

Azure D. Osborne-Lee is a 2018 winner of our Annual Parity Commission.



Ludovica Villar-Hauser (she/her) (Director, Artistic Director)

Ludovica's directorial accomplishments include the New York premiere of Otho Eskin's *Duet*, the world premieres of Teresa Lotz's *She Calls Me Firefly* and 2017 Commission Winner Mèlisa Annis's *Charlie's Waiting*, the Off-Broadway world premiere and West End premiere of Gregory Murphy's *The Countess* (634 Off-Broadway performances), Philip Ridley's *Leaves of Glass*, and Laura Pedersen's *For Heaven's Sake!*, among many other critically-acclaimed productions. Ludovica was the youngest

woman ever to simultaneously produce and direct in London's West End. In the New York theatre industry, she was also one of the few women to own and operate her own theatre — she ran The Greenwich Street Theatre for 17 years. She served on the Board of the League of Professional Theatre Women from 2009-2018 and is currently the Producer of its Oral History Project at NYPL for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center.

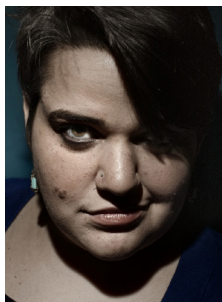


Jennifer Kranz (she/her) (Producing Artistic Director, Company Dramaturg)

An Emmy and Tony award-nominated producer, Jennifer Kranz has spent two decades in production and marketing in entertainment. She was a senior executive at AMC Networks and has held tenures at Cablevision, Time Warner, Lifetime Television and NBC Universal, where she worked on Top 5 TV businesses such as USA Network, Sci Fi Channel, Lifetime and Lifetime Movie Network. Along with the work she does proudly for Parity, Jennifer is also Director of

Creative Development for Rosalind Productions, a commercial theatrical producing company. She continues to act as a senior-level consultant to the media industry. In addition, Jennifer has been a co-producer on Broadway, earning a Tony nomination and Drama Desk Award for the *The Prom*.

Jennifer has a Masters degree from New York University. She is a voting member of the TV Academy of Arts and Sciences and a board member of NY-based influencer theater company Page 73.



Jamie Nicole Larson (she/her) (Set Designer) is a 2nd generation queer femme designer, activist, and educator who specializes in scenic and costume design as well as social justice education surrounding queer families. An alumnus of NYU Tisch's Prod. & Design BFA program, her recent designs include *You Wouldn't Expect* (American Bard Theater Company), *Mirrors* (Downtown Urban Arts Festival), *Glass* (Roots and River Productions), *Delirium's Daughters* (Theatre Row, Studio), and The Fire This Time Festival's 2014 and 2015 seasons.



Sabrina Bianca Guillaume (she/her) (Costume Designer) is a Brooklyn native, freelance costume designer for dance, theatre, and all dress up affairs. She received her MFA in Design & Technical Theater at Brooklyn College (2017). Selected works include: *Black Exhibition* (The Bushwick Starr), *Big Green Theater* (The Bushwick Starr), *Venus* (Waterwell Productions), The Drama League Directorfest 2019 (New Ohio), Design Wing of the Great Plains Theatre Conference, *Cute Activist* (The Bushwick Starr), *Ducklings* (JACK). SabrinaBianca.com



Miriam Nilofa Crowe (she/her) (Lighting Designer) recently designed the world premieres of *Teenage Dick* (Ma Yi + The Public), and *Kennedy* (St. Clements Church). Other recent productions include, in DC, *The Children* (Studio Theatre) and, in New York, *Charlie's Waiting* (Parity Productions), *Hurricane Party* (The Collective NY), *SeagullMachine*, and *home/sick* (The Assembly). She is a founding member of Wingspace Theatrical Design, has an MFA from Yale, and is an adjunct at NYU Tisch Drama.



Twi McCallum (all pronouns) (Sound Designer) is a Black + femme + queer sound designer raised in beloved Baltimore, MD living in New York. When not working, she loves reading urban fiction novels and watching Food Network. Each production is exhilarating to design, because every opportunity is a dream come true. Website: www.twibackstage.me. Instagram: @i.work.backstage. "Planted but not buried." ~Pastor Michael Todd.



Arminda Thomas (she/her) (Historical Dramaturg) is associate artistic director and resident dramaturg for the Going to the River Festival and Writer's Unit. Recent dramaturgy credits include *Jazz* (Baltimore Center Stage); *Wine in the Wilderness* (New Perspectives); *Baton* (Premiere Stage); *Zora Neale Hurston* (New Federal Theatre); *The First Noel* (Classical Theatre of Harlem); and *Soul Struggle: The Works of Georgia Douglas Johnson* (New Perspectives). Writing/adaptation credits include *Shakespeare's Women* (Hattiloo Theatre, Memphis). She holds an MFA in dramaturgy and script development from Columbia University.



Rocío Mendez (she/her, they/them) (Fight Choreographer/Intimacy Director) is an actor/fight director/teacher from Hell's Kitchen, NYC. Fight/Intimacy/Movement Direction credits include: *The Wolves* (Actors Theatre of Louisville); *Love in Hate Nation* (Two River Theater); *The Secret Life of Bees* (Atlantic); *Leap and The Net Will Appear* (New Georges); *The Royale* (Geva Theatre | The Kitchen); *Southern Promises*; *Good Friday* (The Flea Theater); *Marian, or The True Tale of Robin Hood*; *Hearts Like Fists* (Flux Theatre Ensemble). Film credits include *Bad Writing*, *Clandestiny*, *Tied Up*, *Hurt filling*. Nominee for two New York Innovative Theatre Awards - Outstanding Choreography and Movement, Winner for Artemis "Women In Action" Film Festival. Rocío is a Team Member of Unkle Dave's Fight House. rociomendez.com



Ashley Noel Jones (she/her) (Music Director) is an actor/musician, graduate of NYU Tisch. She has worked at Mercury Lounge, World Cafe Live, and Rockwood, and been featured by Afropunk, Instagram, AirBNB, Hilton Hotels. Her original scoring will be featured in the doc series *Our Likeness*. She is currently workshoping her original musical *Framed* which premiered at the Tank NYC in 2018.



Kaelin Elizabeth Fuld (she/her) (Production Stage Manager) is a born and raised New Yorker with a passion for developing original productions. Recent NYC credits: *Venus* and *The Tempest*; select regional: *I Love You... Now Change*, *Pippin*, and *War of the Worlds: Mosaic*. She is a proud founding member of A Collective Artists Inc. (acollectiveartists.org) "Thank you" is hardly sufficient to all who support and love her every day!



Chiara Johnson (they/them) (Stage Manager) is a stage manager from Queens, New York. Recent credits include *Pipeline* at Mile Square Theater, the Utah Shakespeare Festival, The Fire This Time Festival, and the Downtown Urban Arts Festival production of *Mirrors*.



Judith Binus (she/her) (Assistant Director) Director: *Numb is a Freezing Point*, *Red Emma*; Assistant Director: Many plays with Ludovica Villar-Hauser; Stage Manager: Broadway/National/Dance Companies for over 30 years. Lighting Designer: *The Trojan Women*, *The Lower Depths*, Joffrey II Ballet Company. Assistant Lighting Designer to Thomas Skelton, Ken Billington among others. Member League of Professional Theatre Women.



Germán Martínez (he/him) (Associate Sound Designer) is a NYC based Sound Designer and Audio Engineer. Some of his work includes involvement in: *Fiddler On The Roof [In Yiddish]* (Stage 42), *Bob & Carol & Ted & Alice* (The Signature Theatre), *MAC BETH* (Lucille Lortel and Hunter College). He would like to thank Twi for trusting him with this project. Keep up with his work on Instagram: GermanTheSoundDesigner.



Isabella Jane Schiller (she/her) (General Manager) is an actor and jill of all trades born, bred, and based in Manhattan. She previously Company Managed *She Calls Me Firefly* by Teresa (SoHo Playhouse) and General Managed *Charlie's Waiting* by Mèlisa Annis (Theaterlab). Recent acting credits include *AFTERPARTY* with Peculiar Works, *Light-Filled Things* at Dixon Place, and a collaboration with award-winning filmmaker Noor Gharzeddine. Favorite projects include *Arrangement*; *Garbage Person Karaoke*; and *Cheer Up, Charlie*. She is a core member of The Skeleton Rep, and serves on the board of Jezebel Productions, the longest operating women's indie film production company. isbellajaneschiller.com



Marcia Pendelton (she/her) (Audience Development) is the founder and president of Walk Tall Girl Productions, a New York-based boutique marketing, group sales, and audience development agency for the performing arts, with a special emphasis placed on the theater. The company's mission is to make the arts accessible to the widest possible audience.



Mary Sprague (she/her) (Event Producer) is an actor, PWD (Performer With a Disability), and a former Wall Street event planner who is happy to bring her time and talents to Parity Productions as their Event Producer. maryspragueactress.com



Jamibeth Margolis, C.S.A. (she/her) (Casting) is now in her 22nd year as a professional casting director in New York. After working with Johnson-Liff Casting, Cameron Mackintosh, and Margolis-Seay Casting, she now has her own office. Previous credits include the Broadway and National Touring Companies of such hits as *Les Miserables*, *The Phantom Of The Opera*, *Miss Saigon*, *Cats*, and *Jane Eyre*. Currently casting: (Off Broadway) *Fiddler On The Roof*, *In Yiddish*, *Harmony*, *Sistas*, and also Cleveland Musical Theatre, National Yiddish Theatre, and many more. Thank you to Ludovica and the Parity team.

Scott H. Schneider (he/him) (Senior Production Manager) has been the Production Manager for the Bronx Opera Company for fourteen seasons. Recent projects include *Charlie's Waiting* with Parity. Stage Manager for opera and theatre Off Broadway, regional, and on tour. Design credits include lighting for Centenary Stage Company, dell'Arte Opera Ensemble, and Club Med International. Former treasurer Stage Managers' Association; graduate Wesleyan University; Artistic Director Bad Dog Productions.



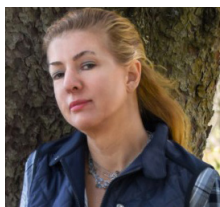
Intuitive Management (Production Management) is a New York-based theatrical production firm specializing in Off-Broadway, Opera, Dance and Live Events. Founded by Scott H. Schneider and Robert Signom III, its mission is to bring superior production values and personalized support to each performance. Recent projects include *The Truth Has Changed* at Performance Space New York, *The Evolution of Mann* at The Cell, *Savage Winter* at BAM, and *Drood* at Laguardia High School of Performing Arts. Current clients include Tri-Cities Opera, Opera Naples, Sybarite 5, Bronx Opera Company, Opera Saratoga, and Jaleo. IntuitiveProdMgmt.com

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Associate Production Manager | Robert Signom III (he/him) |
| Assistant Production Manager | Aislinn Curry (she/her) |
| Master Electrician | Alexandra Christie (she/her) |
| Technical Director | Michael Hetzer (he/him) |
| Production Assistant | Aubrey Zehui Wang (they/them) |
| Stage/Load-in Crew | Gin Beck (he/him), Deedra Bullock (she/her), Malcolm Grant (he/him), Nya Mullins (she/her), Anthony Rackley (he/him), Nick Rodriguez (he/him), Ray A. Rodriguez (he/him), Daniel Soto (he/him), Jose Volmar (he/him) |
| Board Operators | Deedra Bullock (she/her), Jon Naranjo |
| Lighting Special FX | Rome Brown (he/him) |
| Prop Fabrication Consultant | Samantha Shoffner (she/her) |

parity
productions

the state or condition of being equal, especially regarding status or pay.

Parity Productions is a formidable producer of new theatrical work that as a company always ensures that they fill at least 50% of the creative roles on their productions—directors, playwrights, and designers—with women and trans and gender nonconforming (TGNC) artists. Artistically, they develop and produce compelling new plays that give voice to individuals who rebel against their marginalized place in society. parityproductions.org



India Blake / IB Productions (she/her) (Co-Producer) is an award-winning photographer and poet. India's photography focuses on nature, animals, and travel. Her photographs have been shown in galleries in the United States and Europe, with an upcoming Spring 2020 show at Grounds For Sculpture. Ms. Blake published her new book through Newman Springs Publishing in 2019; *Before The Curtain Goes Up* is a photographic journey behind the scenes of small-town theaters. Her first book, *Captured*, is a combined effort of her talents in photography and poetry.

DEEP END
PRODUCTIONS

Cecelia Joyce Johnson / Deep End Productions (she/her) (Co-Producer) has produced *Savannah Bay* by Marguerite Duras at Theater for the New City; *Fathers and Sons* by Richard Hoehler at the Lion Theatre; co-produced with Robert Cole, *Omnium Gatherum*, nominated for a Pulitzer Prize, by Theresa Rebeck & Alexandra Gersten-Vassilaros at the Variety Arts Theatre.

She wrote and produced *Remembering Bobby Short* at the Café Carlyle and also produced and co-wrote with Clint Holmes: *This Thing Called Love: Cole Porter & Paul Simon* (2013 Bistro Award-winner); *Stop This Train* (Broadwayworld.com Audience Award-winner). *Stop This Train* later went on to be performed at McCarter Theatre. Also *Nantucket! The MusACKal* with Sally Horchow and Ryan Runstadler.

On Broadway, she has been a co-producer on *The Parisian Woman & Bandstand*. Other productions include the albums "Live at the Carlyle with Chris Gillespie," "Moonlight in the Garden" with Alan Kogosowski and, also with Kogosowski, the PBS series "Frederic Chopin: A Life to Remember" which was a TV Guide Critics Pick for 3 straight weeks.

NEXT
DOOR
@NYTW

Next Door @ New York Theatre Workshop provides a home for companies and artists who are producing their own work. This initiative provides each project with subsidized resources and space for development and performance in the Fourth Street Theatre. As part of an ongoing effort to expand support for artists at every stage of their careers, this series served over 300 artists in the first two years alone.

**This production is in memory of Meganne George,
longtime friend and collaborator of
Parity Productions.
She is deeply missed.**

MEGANNE GEORGE (1967 - 2019)



Special Thanks to the Team and Board at Parity Productions

FOUNDER AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Ludovica Villar-Hauser

TREASURER

Judith Polzer

PRESIDENT

Kathleen Treat

SECRETARY

Gregory Murphy

BOARD MEMBER

Ashley Garrett

BOARD MEMBER

Mel Wymore

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT & PRESS

Emily Keefe

PRODUCING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR/ COMPANY DRAMATURG

Jennifer Kranz

LITERARY & COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Dani Martineck

GRAPHICS AND MEDIA

Bailey Macejak

GRAPHICS, MEDIA, & RETAIL MANAGER

Maya Graffagna

ADVOCACY INTERN

Grace Wright-Pazdra

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBER

George Weinhouse, M.D.

BOOKKEEPER

Tom Leonard

LEGAL COUNSEL

Susan Steiger

Special thanks to our donors

Parity is supported by institutional support from:

A.R.T./New York, The Buhl Foundation, The Citizens Committee for New York City & the West Side Community Fund, Emma A. Sheafer Charitable Trust, The India Blake Foundation, NYSCA-A.R.T./New York Creative Opportunity Fund (A Statewide Theatre Regrant Program), The Poomer Fund, and The Royal Little Family Foundation

Special thanks

Anonymous, The Estate of Sylvia Sleigh, Mary Francina Golden, The Georges, Suzanne Jurist, Helen Mills & Gary Tannenbaum, Roots and River Productions, and George Weinhouse, M.D.

Thanks to our donors

Lima Addy
Beatrice Aidin
Amy Altadonna
Margot Avery
Suzanne Bachner & Bob
Brader
Deborah Balardini
Judith Barlow
Randi Berry and Samuel
Morales, Jr.
Joanne Black
Katy Blake
Susan Bodo
Margot Breier

Melody Brooks
Gareth Brown
Carol Burton
Steve and Patrice Cassidy
Peggy Chane
Dawn Charles
Christine Cirker
Kristen Cocoman
Michele Clement
Maureen Craig
Laura Cronin
Stephen Cyr
Sidney Danz
K. Dawn-Dumas

Ria DiLullo
Emma Dwyer
Shon Dwyer
Tim Erickson
Paula Ewin
Tim Farish
Leo Farley
Tjasa Ferme
Della Fernandez
Sally Fisher
Valentina Fratti
Bo Frazier
Sarah Francisca Gallegos
Kevin R. Free

Elana Gartner
Barbara Gee
Alison Gee
Marianna Gerrman
Daniel Goldberg
Isa Goldberg
Hans Gruenert
Fran Handman
Stephanie Heitman
Nancy Jacob
Allison Jolly
MJ Kaufman
Alexa Kelly
Liz Kerin

Tom Kilkenny
Debra Kozee
Frances Kranz
Jennifer Kranz
Joanne Kroeger
Renate Kuchardt
Kip Lamonica
Renee Landegger
Mahayana Landowne
Melba LaRose
Antoinette LaVecchia
Charlotte Lee
Judy Levine
Karen Lewis
Chris Lione
Marjorie Lotz
Teresa Lotz
Gabriele Maisels
Maria Makis
Bonnie Martineck
Claudette Mayer
Gabriele Maisels
Twi McCallum
Thomas McCaskill
Frances McGarry
Paloma McGregor
Joyce McKee
Annie McGovern
David Mendizábal
Rachel Messer
Sherrie Miller
Bill Moore
Robert Moore

Lisa Morris
Adam Morrissey
Melissa Moschitto
Gregory Murphy
Paul Murphy
Susan Murphy
Maxine Myers
Beverly Neufeld
Sarah Norris
Valerie Novakoff
June Rachelson Ospa
Leslie Owen
Armand Paganelli
Maryellen Peck
Lorca Peress
Joanne Pottlizer
Cindy Richman Paillet
Tyler Riley
Lius Rueda
Linda Rosman
Reva Rudman
Ann Sachs
Ally Salvatore
Christopher Sanderson
Patricia Santelli
Julie Sargent
Becky Schear
Isabella Schiller
Lisa Schiller
Greg Schnitzler
Amy Schrader
Sam and Rachel Scott
Laura Shamas
Carlos Sirah

Anna Yoon Shin
Leslie Shreve
Carlos Sirah
Randee Aquila Sloane
Charlie Solidum
Alyssa Sorresso
Mary Sprague
Aurin Squire
Mia Stern
Amy Stoller
Cynthia Straus
Laurence B. Straus
Leatha Sturges
Barbara Suleiman
Tawanna Sullivan
Morgan Tachco
Makoto N. Takani
Monica & Douglas Taylor
Loretta Thomas
Suzanne Trauth
Kathleen Treat
Mimi Turque
Joan Vail Thorne
Ludovica Villar-Hauser
Stewart Wagner
George Weinhouse, M.D.
Leslie Westbrook
Jennifer Dorr White
Andrew Wilson
E. Wray
Sara Wyatt
Mel Wymore
Joanne Zippel
Hannelore Zoller

Special thanks to our partners



The Ali Forney Center's mission is to protect LGBTQ youths from the harms of homelessness and empower them with the tools needed to live independently.

ATLANTIC THEATER COMPANY

Atlantic Theater Company seeks to challenge, inspire, and awaken audiences with truthful storytelling presented across our two venues, the Linda Gross Theater and the intimate Stage Two black-box. As a producer of compelling new works, we are committed to championing the stories from new and established artists alike, amplifying the voices of emerging playwrights through our deeply collaborative programs and initiatives.



B Bar and Grill: Converted from a Gulf gas station in 1993, The Bowery Bar and Grill pioneered the grit-to-glam Bowery neighborhood revival. Designed and owned by Eric Goode – restaurant, nightlife and hotel entrepreneur who is behind The Bowery Hotel, Maritime Hotel, The Waverly Inn, The Park Restaurant, and The Jane Hotel.



The Brooklyn Community Pride Center provides services and support to the borough's LGBTQ+ community through original programming and partnerships with other organizations.

Ensemble Studio Theatre

The Ensemble Studio Theatre develops and produces original, provocative and authentic new plays to engage and challenge our audiences. We acknowledge and work to end systemic marginalization and oppression at all levels of our organization. EST discovers and nurtures new voices and supports artists throughout their creative lives, leveraging this extraordinary support and commitment to inclusivity to help artists yield extraordinary work.



The Fire This Time Festival: The African American experience is not represented solely by one voice or one style. The Obie-winning Fire This Time Festival, with FRIGID NYC, provides a platform for talented early-career playwrights of African and African American descent to explore challenging new directions for 21st century theater.



The Flea was founded in 1996 by a group of downtown artists looking to raise a joyful hell in a small space. That same spirit of adventure and excitement, which defines Off-Off-Broadway, also defines The Flea. We don't just encourage risk, we invest in it – in work that wouldn't be produced elsewhere, and in early-career artists who wouldn't gain opportunities elsewhere. As a result our stages are filled with new plays, fueled by emerging talent, and focused on urgent stories that reflect the world around us. The Flea champions those voices least likely to be at the forefront of our culture.



Moxie Arts New York is a theatre company dedicated to engaging audiences with stories of women+ with grit and endurance by providing a platform for new artists to have their works read or sung aloud, resources for artists with new work to be staged, and professional management for artists to see their new works come to fruition as a fully staged production. In our third season, one hundred percent of our creative team positions have been staffed by women+.



LOCS Collective's purpose is to address the gross disparities that exist regarding access to community and resources for LBGTQ+ women, non-binary people of color. Our vision is to create spaces and platforms to celebrate our vibrant culture, solidify our community and increase our visibility.



National Queer Theater: Our mission is to foster and support LGBTQ communities through social justice in the performing arts. Follow us at nationalqueertheater.org



New Perspectives Theatre Company: The award-winning NPTC was founded in 1991 as a multi-racial company dedicated to using theatre as an agent for positive social change. Our mission is to develop and present new plays and playwrights, particularly women and people of color; present classic plays in a way that sheds new light on modern life; and offer the benefits of theatre to communities in need—especially young people & communities in need. Our aim is not to exclude, but to cast a wider net.



Spicy Witch Productions explores gender and identity through the pairing of classical and contemporary plays in repertory. Dedicated to creating roles for women on and offstage, Spicy Witch aims to help close the gender gap in theater and to use the conversation between classical and contemporary text to initiate a dialogue and be a catalyst for social change.



The Tank is a non-profit arts presenter and producer whose mission is to remove economic barriers from the creation of new work for artists launching their careers and experimenting within their art form, and to do so in an environment that is inclusive and accessible.

WAYS TO SUPPORT PARITY PRODUCTIONS

BECOME A SUSTAINING DONOR

Be it a monthly donation or an annual pledge, Parity treasures our sustaining donors. Donate \$5+/month on the web or pledge today!

DOES YOUR COMPANY MATCH DONATIONS?

Already supporting Parity?
Thank you!
Want to double your impact?
Many companies match gifts.
Does yours?

ONE TIME DONOR

Your donation supports work on the 4 plays in our pipeline, 465+ WTAD Artists, approx. 40 partner artists & 200+ Qualifying Productions/year

BECOME A PARITY PARTNER

Have a company of your own?
Partner with Parity.
Reach our 18K+ web visitors, 13K social media followers, and live audiences.
Levels from \$2,500.00 - \$5,000.00

For more information, go to parityproductions.org/support



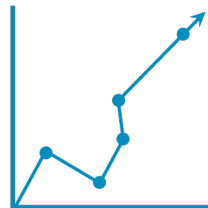
Checks can be mailed to
Parity Productions 450 West 17th
Street #604 New York, NY 10011



Credit Card



Bank Transfer



Stocks

In accordance with New York State Law, the New York State Office of the Attorney General requires that the website and telephone number for the Attorney General's Charities Bureau be included on all solicitations. They are as follows:

<https://www.charitiesnys.com/>
Phone: (212) 416-8401

A copy of our latest annual report may be obtained, upon request, from the organization or from the New York State Attorney General's Charities Bureau, 28 Liberty Street, 15th Floor, New York, New York 10005.



For more Info go to:
AshleyGarrett.Photo



917 363 7728

AshleyGarrettPortraits 

AshleyGarrettPhotography@gmail.com

Ashley
Garrett

PRODUCTION HISTORY

February 6, 2020	Parity Productions, Walk Talk Girl Productions <i>Cultivation Event</i>
January 27, 2020	Black Theater Preview
November 21, 2019	Parity Productions, <i>Fundraising Reading</i>
September 24, 2019	Parity Productions, <i>Developmental Reading</i>
February 21, 2019	Austin Scottish Rite Theater, <i>Reading</i>
November 14, 2018	Parity Productions, New Perspectives Theatre Company <i>Table Reading</i>
September 26, 2018	Parity Productions awards Azure D. Osborne-Lee its Annual Commission for <i>Mirrors</i>
April 25, 2018	Roots and River Productions, Downtown Urban Arts Festival <i>Workshop Production, Best Play</i>
August 10, 2015	The Castillo Theatre, Mario Fratti-Fred Newman Political Play Award <i>Reading</i>
July 23, 2010	Freedom Train Productions' FIRE! New Play Festival <i>Staged Reading</i>

Parity Productions Developmental Reading September 2019



Pictured clockwise from top left: Joyia D. Bradley as "Constance Jenkins," AnJu Hyppolite as "Mabel Mosley," Kirya Traber as "Belle," Ashley Scott reading stage directions, Suzanne Darrell as "Bird," Sheldon Steele as "Ray Johnson," Ashley Noel Jones as "Alma Jean Pierson," and Natalie Jacobs as "Louise Sterling." Photography by Ashley Garrett.

— OTHER ARTISTS ON AZURE'S WORK —

“Azure Osborne-Lee is a fearless artist who explores his personal landscape in a truth-filled, necessary way. He deconstructs love, family, and sexuality, and re-builds it into something wholly original and resonant.

Azure's work reminds us to keep our gaze open and multi-faceted, and our hearts full and empathetic. He is passionate, intelligent, and rigorous in his work and to his core. Azure reminds us why Art matters.

I am grateful to have watched his work evolve, and blessed to know him.”

– Migdalia Cruz, **Theater Maker / Playwright**

“Azure's work makes me shiver all over - it scares and delights and challenges me. Azure's scenes pulse with tension, his characters burn with drive and specificity, his plays crackle with delicious imagery. I never forget them.”

– MJ Kaufman, **Playwright**

“Azure D. Osborne-Lee's writing expands theatrical vocabulary, filling the stage with worlds of intuitive care, consideration for detail, and fully nurtured characters. The theatre needs storytelling like this – that challenges minds, hearts, and souls to open and expand horizons towards another way of viewing life.”

– Jax Jackson, **Actor & Singer**



ARTIST'S STATEMENT

Mirrors was my very first full-length play. I didn't know many people here when I moved to New York City in the late spring of 2009; however, I had secured an internship with Freedom Train Productions (FTP), a Brooklyn-based theatre company that supported up-and-coming Black queer playwrights. Through that internship I was granted automatic admission to their play development workshop. Up until summer I had thought of myself as mostly just an actor. I was terrified that people would find out that I wasn't a "real playwright," but I challenged myself to give a try anyway.

Andre Lancaster, Artistic & Executive Director of FTP, and Aurin Squire, Director of New Play Development of FTP, saw something in the one-act play I wrote in that lab. That fall they took a chance on me and awarded me my very first playwrighting residency. Through that residency I received a commission to write *Mirrors*.

At the time I didn't know how one went about writing a full-length play, but I had an image in my head – a covered mirror in an old house. I knew the protagonists were going to be Black, queer and Southern, like me. And, of course, I knew that somebody was going to die. But I didn't know much else about the story, so I set about writing the piece the best I knew how.

Because I knew the play centered on a funeral rite, I went to the library and checked out as many books about death rituals as I could. Whose rite was I thinking of? How long did it last? I called up an old friend from college who had become a librarian. She happily pointed me in the direction of a book about funeral foods.

Realizing there would be biscuits in the world of the play, I set about teaching myself how to make them. I wanted to know, feel, taste as much as I could about this world. I filled myself with loads of information, and then I wrote. I covered the walls of my room with timelines, charts, and lines to use later. I felt my way forward and prayed I wouldn't embarrass myself.

Mirrors is the result of a handful of people saying yes to me. Because a few people recognized me as kin and were willing to invest in me, I became willing to take artistic risks like I never had before. In trying my voice, I have, I hope, told a story that resonates with many.

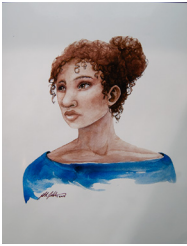
BONUS: Here's a link to the blog I created when I was teaching myself to make biscuits: <https://insearchofbiscuits.wordpress.com/>.

- Azure D. Osborne-Lee, playwright



Azure D. Osborne-Lee, Annual Parity Gala September 2018. Photography by Carlotta Brentan.

Purchase from The Parity Store. 50% of the proceeds from all items purchased at The Parity Store directly fund our productions.



Portrait by Elk Johnston
Sage Luna Creations



Ashley Garrett Greeting Cards
Appealing Orange



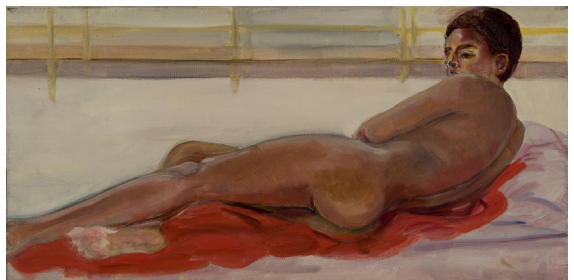
Freshwater pearl necklace

Purchase art from the Sylvia Sleigh Endowment to Parity Productions.

In 2016 Parity Productions was the proud recipient of an unprecedented donation of works of art from the Estate of Sylvia Sleigh – the famed, **progressive** Welsh-born artist known for her gender-bending portraits and male nudes. Her work was heavily influenced by historical Renaissance and neoclassical paintings of mythical or noble subjects and removed the classical objectification of the (usually female-bodied) model but maintained the desire inherent in the nude genre. A **feminist** with a sense of verve and humor, Sylvia always enjoyed turning the tables in her work. **Her work is part of the permanent collection at The Whitney, The MoMA, The National Portrait Gallery in London, The Tate Britain, and many other prominent institutions.**



The Rectory, Pett, Sussex, c. 1949,
Watercolor on Paper, 9" x 11 1/2"



Demonstration Nude at the New School,
c. 1976 - 1980, Oil on Canvas, 9 7/8" x 20"

View the catalogue of available works by scanning the below QR code on your smartphone



A NOTE ON THE WORLD OF *MIRRORS*

by Arminda Thomas, Historical Dramaturg for *Mirrors*

The rural southern community of *Mirrors* is one distinguished by its familiarity, insularity, and potential for physical danger. Into this claustrophobic and sometimes hostile setting, Osborne-Lee thrusts three queer black women, who must somehow negotiate within its spaces to live authentic lives and forge or maintain relationships. The exploration of their distinct approaches, and varying degrees of failure and success, gives way to something uniquely of its time, and applicable to our own.

In a 1989 essay on homophobia in black communities, cultural critic bell hooks reflects on her experience as a child in a small Kentucky town in the 1950s and 60s:

We were not allowed to say negative, hateful comments about the people we knew who were gay...They were our neighbors, our friends, our family. They were us, a part of our black community.¹

After complicating this somewhat idyllic memory with the allowance that gay men (particularly men of means) were more likely to be tolerated than women who were known (or strongly suspected) to be lesbians, hooks goes on to cite the recollections of other “folks who were raised in Southern communities” (whether the folks consulted are also gay is unclear), noting that “for every positive story one might hear about gay life in black communities, there are also negative ones.” After seemingly exhausting her supply of first- and second-hand anecdotes, hooks bemoans her own dearth of data. “Unfortunately, there are very few oral histories and autobiographies that explore the lives of black gay people in diverse gay communities.”

Mid-twentieth century accounts of queer black women building relationships and community are rare, and tend to be located in cities of the North, West, or Midwest. Contemporary oral histories (e.g., E. Patrick Johnson’s 2019 compilation, *Black. Southern. Queer. Woman.*) have expanded the scope of those narratives, and serve to highlight the absence of such voices from the first half to three-quarters of the twentieth century.

One stark characteristic of Osborne-Lee’s southern rural landscape is the vulnerability of black female bodies, a vulnerability primarily due to a system that permitted rape of black women by white men to go unpunished – and which, as historian Danielle McGuire notes, occurred “with alarming regularity:”

White men lured black women and girls away from home with promises of steady work and better wages; attacked them on the job; abducted them at gunpoint while traveling to or from home, work, or church; raped them as a form of retribution or to enforce rules of racial and economic hierarchy; sexually humiliated and assaulted them on streetcars and buses, in taxicabs and trains, and in other public spaces.²

Black women unwilling or unable to assume a non-queer persona also face increased peril within the community, where broad disapproval may lead to sexual violence or so-called “corrective rape.”

The clearest distinction between the urban and rural stories is in the power of numbers. Cities, of course, make it possible both to maintain a protective anonymity (albeit imperfectly) and also to build a supportive community; one can live a mostly uncloseted life without revealing oneself much to the neighbors. In stark contrast, Osborne-Lee’s world (Etheridge, Mississippi) is one that is contracting. In the 1940s scenes, we learn that the queer population has recently been cut in half, from four to two. Nearly twenty years later, that number hasn’t changed. Potential members of a separate, supportive queer Mississippi community opt instead to pursue the possibilities offered in urban environments, while those who are left – or choose to remain – find themselves in a less diverse environment and under more pressure to conform, at least publicly, to the community standards of respectability, including appropriate gender norms. That is to say, one’s queerness may be known (or strongly suspected) by the neighbors, but there is still the expectation of concealment, of the self-denying adoption of a non-queer persona.

It is into this violent and vulnerable, concealed and illuminated, and ultimately familiar, space that Azure Osborne-Lee brings us with *Mirrors*, creating a story that is distinctly black, southern, rural, queer, and female.



Ruth Ellis (alone right, and with Ceciline “Babe” Franklin, left), was one of Detroit’s most prominent gay rights activists. Born in Springfield in 1899, she and Franklin moved to Detroit in 1937. They separated, amicably, in the 1970s.

1 bell hooks, *Talking Back* (Boston: South End Press), 120 - 121.

2 Danielle L. McGuire, *At the Dark End of the Street* (New York: Vintage Books), xviii.

— DEATH RITUALS AS INSPIRATION FOR *MIRRORS* —

by Arminda Thomas, Historical Dramaturg for *Mirrors*

The covered mirror harkens back to a time when death and funeral practices were predominantly the province of the home, where most deaths occurred and where family members—rather than professionals—were tasked with preparing the body for burial services. Such circumstances, historian Suzanne E. Smith notes, “required tasks that both upheld the dignity of the deceased while also aiding the mourning process of those left behind.”

Survivors, usually the women of the household, ritually washed and dressed the corpse in a shroud or “winding sheet” and then placed it in a coffin...The body of the deceased might be in the home for one to three days and was rarely, if ever, left alone. Family members kept the deceased in the front room or parlor, which was often draped in black crepe, with furniture removed and mirrors covered.³

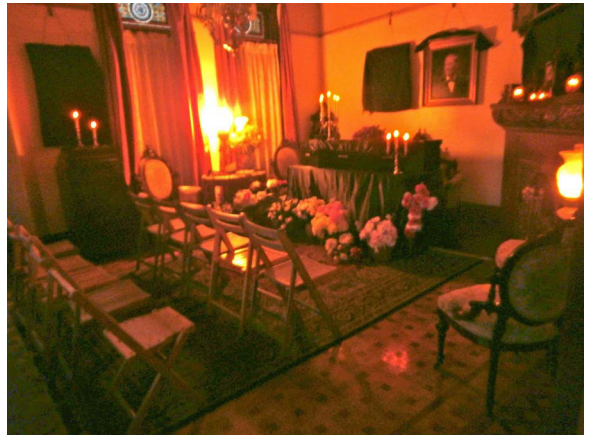
Why cover the mirrors? Just as the custom has roots in many cultures, the reasons for covering mirrors vary both across and within those cultures. Some traditions highlight benefits for the living: mirrors must be covered, they say, to shield mourners from the evidence of their own grief, so that they may focus on the tasks at hand. Others assert that mirrors must be covered to protect the house and its inhabitants from further misfortune, which may range in severity from simple bad luck to impending death—and that said misfortune may even be brought about by the recent dearly departed.

“The spirit newly released from the body,” notes writer and folklorist Zora Neale Hurston, “is likely to be destructive. This is why a cloth is thrown over the face of a clock in the death chamber and the looking glass is covered over. The clock will never run again, nor will the mirror ever cast any more reflections if they are not covered so that the spirit cannot see them.”⁴ Hurston’s writing reflects the belief, held by some West African cultures (among others), that the time between death and burial is a liminal space, in which the spirit has left the world of the living but has yet to transition to the world of the dead.

Certain West African traditions also hold that the two worlds are connected by water, that flashes of ancestral spirits may be glimpsed on the water’s surface.⁵ Perhaps this tradition helped fuel the sense of a mirror, another reflective surface, as a space from which the newly dead might wreak havoc on the living. Yet the peril, in this telling, is not to the living alone.

Because a mirror is not a true connector of the worlds, but a false one, it may draw a soul away from its transition into the spirit realm, keeping it forever tethered to the earthly world.

This appears the tradition alluded to in the play as Bird's rationale for covering all the mirrors (but especially the one which had belonged to Belle) to make sure that Belle's spirit will not be forever imprisoned in her former home. Traditionally, however, the covered mirror is reserved for the dead person's home – or, more specifically, the place of death. Belle, we are told, has not been in Bird's home for many years and did not die there. Moreover, in 1960, the option clearly exists to leave Belle's body solely to the professionals. Bird's decision to bring Belle into her home – to risk, in her mind, Belle's immortal soul – suggests something deeply and urgently unsettled in her own.



3 Suzanne E. Smith, "Laid Out In Big Mama's Kitchen," *American Behavioral History: An Introduction* (NYU Press, 2005), 162.

4 Zora Neale Hurston, *Mules and Men* (Harper & Row, 1935), 229.

5 Elizabeth A. Fenn, "Honoring the Ancestors: Kongo-American Graves in the American South," *Southern Exposure* 13, no. 5 (Sept/Oct. 1985): 43.

