



# BLACK NATIVITY



*A play by Langston Hughes*

## COMPANY

Ariel Campbell	Mallory Lutz	Sophia Truitt
Emilee Chavez	Akilah M	Cameron Ward
Amy Hardison	Kyla Major	Sonora Warkentin
Dorian Harris	Chelsea Nolasco	Jasmaine Williams
Latonia Haynes	AnnaMarie Ronquillo	Julia Williams
Annie Hendricks	Izaiah Ruiz	Alondra Williams-
Janae Herrera	Jeremy Salas	Vasquez
Charlita Houston	Sandra Salazar	
Alex Lujan	Alexis Sims	

## PRODUCTION TEAM

Director .....	tony sanders
Musical Director .....	Jenny Myers
Choreographer .....	Joy Ndombeson
Stage Manager .....	Maddie Brown
Company Manager.....	Madison Nicole Alley
Asst. Choreographer/Dance Captain.....	Kyla Major
Costume Design.....	Hannah Navia
Lighting Design .....	Alex Bush
Sound Design.....	W.O.W. Productions
Set Design .....	tony sanders
Set Construction .....	David "Cuz" Recchia, Brian Martin, Noah Martin
Set Painter .....	Nicki Lack
Marketing .....	Kristina Clark
Photographer .....	Megan Alvarez
Dramaturgy .....	Darrell Waters
Walking Stick Artist .....	Earl @ Nature's Oddesies
Program Artist .....	Ysalane Trevino
Lighting Board Op.....	Maddie Brown
Sound Board Op .....	Diffey

## CHOIR

Central Valley Fresno Component of the Northern California  
Chapter of the Gospel Music Workshop of America

Sylvia Norman	Sandra Caldwell	Karen Parker
Linda Coleman	Shelly Cook	Irma Rodriguez
Adeline Sims	David Haynes	Dorthina Morris
Lura Black	Denise Jamison	Lakisha Randolph
Nisha Black	Gail Mallard-Warren	Marie Sims
Avis Braggs	Mishaun McNeal	Mary Summers
Joyce Brewer	Dorothy McNary	Susan Yarbrough
Versie Boykin	Jasmaine Mitchell	Rachel Young

## SONGS

### Act One: The Child Is Born

Silent Night  
Joy To The World  
My Way Is Cloudy  
No Room At The Inn  
Most Done Travelling  
Oh, Jerusalem In The Morning  
Poor Little Jesus  
No-Good Shepherd Boy  
Go Tell It On The Mountain  
Rise Up, Shepherd, And Follow!  
Sweet Little Jesus Boy  
Oh, Come All Ye Faithful

### *Intermission (15 minutes)*

### Act Two: The Word Is Spread

I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For  
The Blood Saved Me  
Leak In The Building  
Your Will Be Done  
Get Away Jordan  
People Get Ready  
Goin Up Yonder

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE & BIO

In 1961, *Black Nativity* became one of the first shows penned by a black playwright to be produced Off-Broadway. Langston Hughes' joyous holiday musical is a testament to his ability to blend his prose with his faith. This timeless work, tells the story of the Nativity through a combination of scripture, poetry, dance, pantomime, and song from the African-American perspective. Mr. Hughes' seminal piece has always served as a reminder to me that the Nativity story is one for everyone, all races, and no one particular race. Our production remains true to the playwright's intention of giving access to the story of Christ's birth to everyone and yet expands upon that theme. This Black Nativity is presented with a beautiful cast that consists of persons of all races, religions, genders, and orientations.

**tony sanders**, (who doesn't capitalize his name) is an award-winning actor/director/writer/educator/coach who has worked in film, television, video, regional and Off-Broadway theater, as well as, three national tours. Notable performances include *Mrs. Santa Claus* (with Angela Lansbury, Charles Durning and Michael Jeeter); *The Forbidden City* (Morgan Freeman, Gloria Foster and Giancarlo Esposito with Joseph Papp); and *Go Down, Garvey* with Sharon Leal. tony received the Valley Arts Alliance "Best Actor" award for his portrayal of Tom Robinson in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Additionally, his solo show, *Mojo de Negro...a modern-day minstrel show* was selected for the inaugural Hollywood Fringe Festival. Locally, he has received high praise for his performances in Good Company Players' productions of *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Tom Robinson), *Shrek, the Musical* (Donkey), as well as *The Mountaintop* (Dr. King) and *ART* (Marc). tony's current project is an original web-series that he wrote called *landslide...the series*. He received his BFA in Theatre Arts (Acting Emphasis) from The University of the Arts located in his hometown, Philadelphia, PA. tony is a proud member of Actor's Equity, Screen Actors Guild (SAG) and American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (AFTRA). He is also the founder and Artistic Director of Shine! Theatre (IG: @shinetheatre). Follow his exploits on IG @nonstoptony.

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**Aerial Whimsy** is an aerial arts studio that teaches aerial silks, hoop, and sling/hammock classes. It was founded in 2023 by Amy Hardison and Jessica White, both of whom have over 12 years of combined experience teaching aerial, and extensive training in dance, costuming, and stage production. At Aerial Whimsy, the main goal is to train each student to be a well-rounded aerialist, strong in their physical fitness and performance finesse. Aerial Whimsy is proud to partner with Shine! Theatre this Christmas season and wishes you joy and contentment as we celebrate Christ's birth!

**The Fresno Component of the Northern California Chapter of the Gospel Music Workshop of America** is dedicated to the perpetuation of gospel music as an original American art form and the promotion of gospel music to the world. Since its inception in 1985, the GMWA Fresno Component, providing a platform for the exploration and development of skills to all who are passionate about this music genre, have ministered in music at numerous venues throughout the Central Valley. Rehearsals, held monthly, are under the leadership of Chapter Representative, Sylvia Norman and Minister of Music, Linda Coleman.

**Maddie Brown** is a student at FPU, majoring in Vocal Performance and Theatre Studies. She has been seen backstage stage managing and working tech for previous shows at FPU: *Harvey* and *Godspell*. She is excited to be a part of this collaborative production with Shine! Theatre and FPU Theatre. Maddie would like to thank her close friends and family for always encouraging her in her dreams.

**Ariel Campbell** is making her first acting debut in *Black Nativity*. She is an accomplished dancer who has performed at various venues with the well-known dance group Purpose II Praise, as well as at her church Mount Pleasant Baptist Church. Ariel has also performed at City Hall, Fresno Chaffee Zoo and numerous local schools in Fresno. Ariel has been the face of the community appearing in commercials representing youth for Fresno Unified School District.

**Emilee Chavez** began her aerial training in 2019 and excelled to an advanced level by 2022. She was one of the first aerial students to be

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invited to audition for a full stage production. She has performed in *A Nutcracker Like No Other* as an arch-angel, and *The Wizard of Oz* as the tornado. She is proud to join Shine! Theatre's *Black Nativity* this Christmas season, and looks forward to shining bright for all!

**Amy Hardison** has been in the performing arts for 16 years. Her love of dance took her to Fresno City College where she received an Associate's Degree in Dance; after which she continued her education at Fresno State University, receiving her Bachelor's Degree in Theater Arts with a Dance emphasis. Hardison's aerial journey began in 2013 when she was introduced to aerial silks by Fresno Dance Collective. Currently, Hardison is one of the founders of Aerial Whimsy and teaches silks, hoop, and sling/hammock classes.

**Dorian Harris** signed up to be a part of *High School Musical Jr.* with Children's Musical Theaterworks over the summer of 2022. He was cast as an ensemble and that is where he found his passion and love for performing on stage. He was later cast as part of the ensemble for the musical *Oliver* and had a role as the butler in *Frozen The Musical*. Dorian is continuously growing and searching for new and exciting opportunities where he can thrive and shine on stage.

**Latonia Haynes** was born to sing and be an actress. She has appeared in plays such as *DreamGirls* at Roger Rocka's Dinner Theater and *Carmen Jones* at Fresno State University Theatre. She has also taken on small roles in church musicals and plays, and has been the director of her church choir for more than 20 years. Latonia is in a local gospel community choir called Black Out, singing at weddings, community events, and church events. Latonia wants to honor her father Junior Haynes for helping her become the singer she is today.

**Annie Hendricks** has been training as an aerialist since 2019. Her hard work and dedication was immediately recognized by her instructors, and she has since continued to grow as an aerialist and performer. Hendrix was invited to audition for the main stage production of *The Wizard of Oz* in spring of 2023, in which she understudied as both the tornado and a flying monkey. She has previously performed in five student showcases, and is excited for her premiere performance as the Star in *Black Nativity!*

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**Janae Herrera** is 23 years old, has a B.S. in Criminology from Fresno State University, and an A.A. in Theater Arts from Fresno City College. During her time at FCC, she worked as a student costumer. Previous credits include *Spring Awakening* (costume designer), *Hands on a Hardbody* (Chris), and *Anna in the Tropics* (Marela). She is proud to work alongside this cast and crew and hopes you enjoy the show.

**Charlita Houston** (Lita Colón) is a soprano artist with stunning vocal agility. She has both an Associate and Bachelor's Degree in Vocal Music. Charlita's upbringing in the church focused her artistry on the gospel genre which has given her prodigious opportunities to open for several world renowned artists. As a versatile performer and interpreter, Charlita finds music to be a spiritual and collaborative endeavor and enjoys creating experiences for her audiences.

**Alex Lujan** is an FPU senior majoring in Theater. He has participated in 18 theatrical productions, some of which include *25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (Coneybear), *Shrek the Musical* (Lord Farquaad), *Ordinary Days* (Warren), and *Godspell* (Judas/John the Baptist). Mr. Lujan would like to give a shoutout to his theatrical buddies for making this show a fun experience, his instructors for making his performance much more, his family for supporting him, and Mrs. Rosalinda Lujan for raising such a talented young man and always providing moral support through his theatrical journey.

**Mallory Lutz** has been involved in theater since she was in elementary school. She has always been the force behind the scenes but rarely on stage. You may have recently seen her as Cindy Barns in Shine! Theatre's *Hands on a Hardbody*. Mallory wants to thank Jenny and tony for believing in her. She has been with Shine! for the last nine years and is currently the president of the board.

**Akilah M** is happy to be part of her first show with Fresno Pacific Theater, but is no stranger to the stage. She has acted with Good Company Players, and you can catch her in the new upcoming independent film *Among the Willows* as Suzie. When Akilah's not in front of the camera, she enjoys being a hair enthusiast and community volunteer, bringing joy to the elderly. She is also a proud member of Frida Cafe, where coffee and creativity come together!

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**Kyla Major** attends CenCal Dance Academy and has 17 years of dance experience. She holds the title of Miss Black Fresno and is the recipient of the Friends Of The Arts scholarship. Kyla has also participated in four City Dance shows and Nutcracker. Kyla would like to thank Shine! Theatre and CenCal Dance Academy.

**Jenny Myers** received her BM in classical vocal performance from Cornish College of the Arts in Seattle WA. She was awarded an internship to perform Main Stage with the Seattle Opera and was fortunate to be able to perform with the 5th Avenue theatre association. Jenny has performed extensively throughout the Pacific Northwest in Opera, Oratorio, Operetta, and Musical Theater. While in Seattle, Jenny earned her equity status when she was cast as Cosette in the national 'Broadway Across America' tour of *Les Miserables*. Other tours include *The Pirates of Penzance* (Mable) and *Into the Woods* (Cinderella). Her all time favorite role she performed was Mimi in *La Boheme*. Jenny is a Fresno Native and has directed, vocal coached, and performed at several local theatre companies throughout the Central Valley. She currently resides in Fresno, and is extremely happy to be able to call Shine! Theatre her home.

**Chelsea Nolasco** is delighted to join Shine! Theater for the *Black Nativity* production! She has also been involved in shows such as *The Little Mermaid Jr* (Ursula) and *Big Fish* (Ensemble). She would like to thank her mom for getting her back into theater, and her wonderful friends and family who have supported her along the way.

**AnnaMarie Ronquillo's** love for theater began when she performed as a Junior Company member with Good Company Players. This will be her fifth musical with Shine! Theatre. Some of her past productions include *Hands on a Hard Body* (Virginia), *Bare* (Claire), *Big River* (Widow Douglas), and *We Are Monsters* (Tooth; Varah). She would like to thank God, her family, and Jenny for their endless love and support.

**Izaiah Ruiz** is a junior at FPU studying history and theater. He has participated in shows including *Godspell* (Ensemble), *The Toy Maker* (Noah), and *Harvey* (Dr. Sanderson). He would like to thank his family, friends, God, and his little brother, Izaac Ruiz.

**Jeremy Salas** has performed for many Central Valley theatre companies over the last 21 years. Some memorable performances

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include *Godspell*, *Hands on a Hardbody*, *A Shot in the Dark*, *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown*, *Grey Gardens*, *Memphis*, *Les Misérables*, *Miss Saigon*, *Spring Awakening*, and *Evita*. He's currently enrolled at University of the Southwest in their doctoral program for Healthcare Administration, and works in Sales/Marketing at Magnolia Crossing. He would like to thank Jenny and tony. Enjoy the show!

**Sandra Salazar** is a 26 year old from Porterville. She found her love of music and singing in the seventh grade and was part of her school's choir throughout middle and high school. She obtained her Bachelor's degree from University of California, Merced and teaching credential from the California State University, Fresno. She is currently teaching Kindergarten within Fresno.

**Alexis Sims** is a sophomore at FPU majoring in Music & Worship Ministry. She has a love for all things music, but most importantly a passion for serving God through her music. She is involved in the worship teams on campus and at her church, as well as numerous choir ensembles. She would like to thank her family, church and friends for their love and support during her journey.

**Sophia Truitt** is thrilled to be sharing the stage with her grandma and grandpa and is excited to make Shine! Theatre's production of *Black Nativity* her performing debut. Sophia loves to sing, dance and read, and enjoys outdoor activities. Sophia would like to especially thank her supportive daddy, family, her vocal coach Miss. Jenny and Mr. tony sanders for always being there for her and supporting her love for the arts.

**Cameron Ward** has been involved with theater since his sophomore year of high school. He has participated in shows such as The Three Rivers Players production of *Arsenic and Old Lace*, FPU's production of *Godspell*, Blossom Trail Players production of *Into the Woods*, and Spectral Raven Theatre's production of *The Red Fiend*. Cameron is ecstatic for this amazing opportunity and hopes you love the show!

**Sonora Warkentin** is a nine-year-old student at Bullard Talent Elementary School, where she sings in the Balladeers, a choir composed of fourth and fifth grade students. This is her first time participating in theater outside of school. She would like to thank her family, friends and music teacher for all of their encouragement.

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**Jasmaine Williams** wears multiple hats: singer, songwriter, and worshipper. She is a member of S.W.A.G Ministries, GMWA Choir, and Blackout Choir, spreading the gospel through the power of music. But her favorite hat is just being a wonderful mother of two. Not to mention a professional pastry chef! This is her first production with Fresno Pacific Theater, and she would like to thank this wonderful theater program for the opportunity to perform a wonderful show. Enjoy!

**Julia Williams** is a Fresno native who loves to sing, dance, and perform. After years of exposure to the performing arts, singing at home with and watching her family take the stage, it is finally her turn to be in the spotlight! She is excited to share her performing arts debut with all of you.

**Alondra Williams-Vasquez** taught dance to at-risk youth and adults for over 20 years, as well as directed youth choirs and taught voice for several non-profit organizations. She has landed starring roles in Actin' Up! Entertainment's *The Greatest Gift*; *Ordinary People*, *Extraordinary Love*; and *Music Matters*. She would like to thank her family for always supporting her throughout her career and ministry. Her family is her inspiration, and she wants them to be proud of her like she is of them.

### Save the Date: FPU Spring 2024 Auditions!

#### The Madrigal Dinner

A Musical Comedy In One Act

By Kevin Kelleher

Directed by Elizabeth Fiester

Auditions: January 29 & 30, 2024, 6:30 p.m.

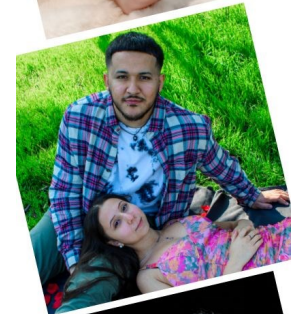
Callbacks: January 31, 2024, 6:30 p.m.

\*This performance was produced by special arrangement with  
THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY of Woodstock, Illinois

## SPECIAL THANKS

A very big thank you to all the people who helped make this production a reality!

- \* Aerial Whimsy: Jessica White, Amy Hardison
- \* Christian David
- \* HRSS Dean Ron Herms, Ph.D.
- \* Brandi Martin
- \* Brian Martin
- \* Noah Martin
- \* VPA Chair Rebecca McMillen, Ph.D.
- \* David Recchia
- \* Manuel Romo
- \* W.O.W. Productions: Dan and DJ Adalpe
- \* Link & Betty Sanders
- \* Minister Linda Coleman



FRESNO PACIFIC UNIVERSITY PRESENTS

# Pacific **artist** series

*Pacific Artist Series - Concert III*

*Treasures of the Baroque Laudami Ensemble*

**Saturday, January 20, 2024 | 7:00 p.m.**

Get your tickets online or at the door, if available

**\$15 General Admission | \$5 Students  
and FPU community** (space-available basis)



[fpu.edu/pacificartist](https://fpu.edu/pacificartist)

## UPCOMING THEATER EVENTS

FPU Theatre and English Present:

*The Stage Reading Series*

**Feb. 21 - The Words of Langston Hughes**

**April 3 - The Glass Menagerie by Tennessee Williams**

The Lin Family Performance Studio, Warkentine CAC

*Madrigal Dinner Theater*

An FPU Visual and Performing Arts  
collaborative dinner theater event.

March 21-23, 2024, 7:00 p.m.; March 24, 2024, 2:00 p.m.

Elizabeth V. Lyles Theater, Warkentine CAC