NAMBI E. KELLEY'S

RE-MEMORI

- WORLD PREMIERE -

DIRECTED BY CHRIS BERRY

OCTOBER 12 - NOVEMBER 5, 2023



RE-MEMORI

CAST & CREW

ARTISTIC STAFF

Director: Chris Berry

Playwright: Nambi E. Kelley Dramaturg: Margo Skornia

Stage Manager: Jiccarra N. Hollman*
Assistant Stage Manager: Zhané Jackson

Choreographer: Patricia Brown

Scenic Designer: Mina Kinukawa
Costume Designer: Gregory Horton
Projections Designer: Deja Collins
Sound Designer: Gregory Robinson**
Properties Designer: Abbee Warmboe
Lighting Designer: Latrice Lovett

CAST

Memori Brooks: Shá Cage*

PRODUCTION TEAM

Associate Director of Production: Ron Schultz Penumbra Technical Director: Zeb Hults

UofM Technical Director: Jason Allyn-Schwerin

Scenic Charge Artist: Angelique Powers

Sound Board Programmer/Operator: Olivia Nyman

Projections Supervisor: Nick Fetting Projections Assistant: Jerry Hsiao Projections Crew: Dominique Jones,

Antonio Duke

Carpenters: Mike Lee, Jay Claire, Emma C Murphy,

Jacelyn Stewart, Gwen Allison, Toni Conover,

Memori Brooks: Comfort Dolo*

Danielle Croom, Nina Gourley, Jonathan Haller, Breanna Hoeppner, Julia Jacobson, Benjamin Litzau, Sam Meverden, Ella Nelson, Lily Wong Electrics Crew: Nick Fetting, Andy Glischinski, Ray Stevenson, Richard Graham, Bridget "B" Kelly, Dominique Jones, Mathew Terilliger***

Head Electrician: Mark Dougherty***

Draper: Brandi Mans

Dyer/Painter: Samantha Haddow

Assistant Costume Designer: China Simmons

Wardrobe Crew: Hannah Walvatne

*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

+ Denotes members of SDC

**Denotes member of United Scenic Artists

++ Penumbra Summer Institute Alumni

*** Member of IATSE Local 13







LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

I am so very happy to be able to welcome you to *Re-Memori* here at Penumbra. This is a very special piece. Not only is it the world premiere of a new play by the soulful Nambi E. Kelley, this represents Chris Berry's first staged production at Penumbra. As the Arts Director, Chris has curated a lovely journey for us this year, from new work to classical work from the Black Theatre canon. This stirring one-woman show carries us on a nuanced journey that illuminates the power of our dreams and how they might be influenced and even manifested by our ancestors.

As we live into the fullness of our mission as a center for racial healing, Penumbra's team has taken deep care to shepherd this piece into life. From the loving staging to the abundant resources our wellness team has provided the cast and crew, we are caring for the process in profoundly deep ways. We have always believed that theatre can remake the world. Our work behind the scenes has been to change the way that theatre is made.

I hope that you are moved by the courage and beauty of this play and remember that your support ensures that Penumbra can continue to be a place of healing for all of us.

Sarah Bellamy, President

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Liberation, sovereignty, and freedom are notions that are deeply embedded in the cultural DNA of Black Americans. They drive an unceasing quest to embody deeper connections with our ancestral roots. What's remarkable is that even this questing can engender profound healing and foster communal emancipation. Our odyssey is chronicled from the souls who once envisaged the world in which we presently reside, and it is made real by our obligation to dream forward for the generations to come. This dreamwork has been the blueprint for social movements throughout American history.

Nambi E. Kelley's *Re-Memori* offers audiences a portrait of the often invisible labor of the dreamwork that is so necessary for collective liberation. It illustrates how the past is alive in our present and how it can forecast the future ahead.

Our spiritual quest for sovereignty does not adhere to a linear, time bound trajectory. Our dreamwork is not prescriptive. It is by guided by ancestral spirits. It is inspired by those not yet born. *Re-Memori* beckons us to embrace the entirety of our journey toward freedom—a journey that includes moments of joy, pain, visceral emotional outpourings, and solemn communal mourning.

I extend a heartfelt invitation to you to embark upon this transformative journey with us. Whatever you feel as we remember aloud is welcome here – from laughter to tears, from exuberant amens to profound introspection. *Re-Memori* invites us to journey together, dreaming and making real a sense of community that transcends time and space.

Chris Berry, Director

LETTER FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT

In 2019, I was working in a writer's room in Los Angeles as a staff writer for a show on HBO. I got a notification from a family group message on social media that a monumental event had just occurred. Someone in the family was able to recover the will of Master Ethen Stroud from the 1800s. In it, are the names of some of our ancestors. I read the will. And I sat in stunned silence for about an hour as tears poured down my face. I am only the third generation born post enslavement on my father's side. The will contains the names of people who I'd grown up hearing about, because for our family, these ancestors are that close. I, then, closed the computer, wiped my face, and went back to work. A year later, I was imagining a new play that spanned multiple generations, all connected by a single artifact. I thought maybe the artifact was a necklace, a picture frame, something mundane and predictable. When I realized that the artifact that connected these generations is this will, it stopped me cold in my tracks.

This will and a dream I had about my grandmother asking for permission to go home to God is the basis of this play. But it is not the whole of the play. *Re-Memori* is an ancestor's blessings. A song that is salve for the soul. May it be a blessing to you. May it release whatever is inside of you that needs peace, love, flight.

M. Millar (1)

Nambi E. Kelley, Playwright
Carol and Don Quinn Kelley's Daughter
Jeannette and John Quincy Adams Kelley, granddaughter
John Scipio Kelley's great granddaughter

FOUNDING LEADERSHIP



Lou Bellamy, Founder & Artistic Director Emeritus

Lou Bellamy is the founder and artistic director emeritus of Penumbra.

During his 40 year tenure, Penumbra evolved into one of America's premier theaters dedicated to dramatic exploration of the African American experience. Under his leadership, Penumbra has grown to be the largest theater of its kind in America and has produced over 40 world premieres, including August Wilson's first professional production. Bellamy and Penumbra are proud to have produced more of Mr. Wilson's plays than any theater in the world. Bellamy is an Obie

Award-winning director, an accomplished actor, and for 38 years was appointed as an Associate Professor at the University of Minnesota in the Department of Theatre Arts and Dance. Mr. Bellamy most recently directed Penumbra's productions of *What I Learned in Paris*, *Thurgood*, *Pipeline*, and *The Brothers Paranormal*. Selected directing credits outside of Penumbra include plays at the Logan Festival, Indiana Repertory, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Arizona Theatre Company, Denver Center for the Performing Arts, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Signature Theatre, Cleveland Playhouse, Guthrie Theater, Kennedy Center, Geva Theatre, Kansas City Repertory, Gem Theater, Round House, and Hartford Stage.

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP



Sarah Bellamy, President

Sarah Bellamy is the President of Penumbra, leading the programs team in the work of racial healing. During her time with the company, Bellamy has designed several acclaimed programs that engage audiences in critical thinking, dialogue, and action around issues of race and social justice. She is a stage director (recent work at Penumbra includes *Spittin' Seeds*; *Sugar in Our Wounds*; and *for colored girls...*) and a writer focusing on essays, memoir, plays, and

short stories. A respected scholar and professor, Bellamy is a graduate of Sarah Lawrence College and holds an M.A. in the Humanities from the University of Chicago. She has taught at Macalester College, the University of Minnesota, and served as Visiting Professor of Theatre and Culture at United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities. She is a leading facilitator around issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion and has led coalition building efforts to address inequities in philanthropy and theatre. A skilled and dynamic public speaker, she offers audiences fresh, big-hearted, and courageous perspectives on a wide range of topics. Her lectures on the power

of race and representation have been presented across the country. She is a founding member of the Twin Cities Theatres of Color Coalition and has served on the Board of Directors for Theatre Communications Group as a member of the executive committee. She has been widely recognized for her visionary work and has received numerous awards including a 2015 Bush Fellowship and the Hubert H. Humphrey Public Leadership Award. She is currently serving as a board member for The Jerome Foundation and is the proud mama of two beautiful children.



Amy Thomas, COO

Amy Thomas is Chief Operating Officer of Penumbra. A nonprofit leader working at the intersection of arts and social justice, Thomas' work includes leading organizations in inspired storytelling processes to growing organizational capacity and sustainability. She has over 20 years of nonprofit management and administrative experience with organizations ranging from major public universities to exhibition management services. As part of the executive leadership team at Penumbra, she is responsible for the business, administrative,

and operational management. Prior to her work at Penumbra, she led the marketing, communications, and audience engagement initiatives for ArtPower! at the University of California, San Diego and The Broad Stage in Santa Monica. She was part of the creative and management team behind The Loft, a 250-capacity performance lounge and restaurant voted "Best Venue in San Diego." She co-led the Place Matters Project, an interdisciplinary year-long residency exploring the nature of community with the Urban Bush Women, students, faculty and administrators. Thomas has a B.A. from the University of California, San Diego; she was a visiting scholar at the University of California, Berkeley. She is a Global Arts Management Fellow at the University of Maryland and serves as a board member for Urban Roots.

ARTISTIC TEAM



Chris Berry, Arts Director and Director of *Re-Memori*Chris Berry is the Arts Director at Penumbra, an artist, and an educator. He received his BFA in Acting from North Carolina A&T State University and his MFA in acting from Brown/Trinity. He served as the President of the Black Theatre Network. As Vice President and President of the Black Theatre Network, he had the pleasure of planning two national conferences— Black Theatre Week and Black Theatre: Unapologetically Black. He served as the Director

of Education and Humanities and the Program Director of the Black Arts Institute at the Billie Holiday Theatre. As a dialect coach, he worked with Signature Theatre on the production of Katori Hall's *The Hot Wing King* (Pulitzer Prize winner) and the television show *P-Valley* Seasons 1 and 2. He has served as the dialect coach for *Cullud Wattah* at the Public Theater and *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992* at Syracuse Stage. He has directed the following select works: *Hands Up! 7 Playwrights 7 Testaments* (New Venture Theatre), *Detroit '67*, *Skeleton Crew* (FAMU), and *The Colored Museum* (Project1Voice). He has served as an assistant director for the Classical Theatre of Harlem's production of *The First Noel*. As an educator, he has been a member of the leadership institute at the Alliance for Theatre in Higher Education. He served as the cocoordinator for the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival's Irene Ryan Acting Scholarship Audition in the Southeast region and as a regional judge for the August Wilson Monologue Competition. He served as an Assistant Professor at the University of North Carolina, Charlotte and Florida A&M University.



Nambi E. Kelley, Playwright

An accomplished playwright, Nambi is in development with multiple commercial projects for Broadway. She is the recipient of The Prince Prize and an NNPN commission, for which her play *Re-Memori* was presented at WP's Pipeline Festival in New York City. A former playwright-in-residence at the National Black Theatre, Dramatists Guild, and the Goodman Theatre, Nambi was chosen by Toni Morrison to adapt her novel "Jazz." Her adaptation of *Richard Wright's Native Son* (Sam French, Concord Theatricals),

has been produced all over the country and premiered in New York at The Duke on 42nd Street (The Acting Company, producer), receiving a Drama League nomination (Best Revival) and an AUDELCO Award (Best Production). Most recently, Nambi served as a writer/co-producer on Peacock's *Bel Air*. Previous television credits include: *Lady In The Lake* (Apple), *Our Kind of People* (Fox), and *The Chi* (Showtime). Nambi is developing for television and film, including a film project with the Oscar Award winning producer, Lagralane, tba. Nambi's newly formed production company, FIRST WOMAN, recently produced a film version and two in-person national tours of Nambi's young audiences' play, *Jabari Dreams of Freedom*, directed by Daniel Carlton. The film version of *Jabari* has been selected for several film festivals, winning the Black Panther International Film Festival in India, and The IBDFF International Film Festival in Toronto (Best Kids Film). Also an award-winning actress, Kelley has been seen on television and has graced stages all across the world. *www.nambikelley.com*



Margo Skornia, Dramaturg

Margo Skornia (she/her/hers) is a dramaturg and writer. She is the resident dramaturg at First Woman, LLC and recently served as the Festival Dramaturg for the 2023 New Play Festival at the University of Iowa. Research includes Dramaturgy a la Carte, which was presented at the Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas annual conference in 2021. Margo's recent writing includes *PlayWork* and *What's the Devil Been Up To?* She has an upcoming review of Theatre

of the Macabre in Theater History Studies. www.margoskornia.com



Jiccarra N. Hollman*, Stage Manager

Jiccarra N. Hollman has enjoyed roles in *Kumbayah: The Juneteenth Story* (Breck/Denfeld; Duluth, MN); *Secrets* (Capri Theater); and *The Energized Guyz*, a traveling show with the National Theatre for Children. Her love for theatre has also brought her into stage management. She is a Captain in the Air Force and founder of News On Purpose, a platform for Black and Brown Stories to be shared by Black and Brown bodies. She was awarded the

Children's Theatre Company 2022-23 Stage Management Fellowship where she served for nine months before going on to stage manage their summer production of *Head Over Heels*. This role also took her to the Broadway Stage Management Symposium in New York. In 2019, she successfully stage-managed three productions in three months within three theatres including, *Eartha Kitt* at Minnesota's Phoenix Theatre; *Hit the Wall* at the Southern Theatre; and *The Viking and The Gazelle* at Mixed Blood Theatre. Hollman believes storytelling allows her to serve, grow, collaborate, and activate while being expressive through multiple disciplines of art. She is honored to be serving as the Stage Manager for Penumbra on the historical production of *Re-Memori* written by Nambi E. Kelley as Chris Berry's directorial debut as the new Arts Director.



Zhané Jackson, Assistant Stage Manager

Zhané Jackson, a.k.a Ruby a.k.a TENACITY, is a creative mover, writer, director, producer, and event coordinator based in the Twin Cities. Her career as an artist was birthed as a co-founder and member of New Black City: an all black, femme, Hip Hop dance collective. For 7 years, she's been performing on stages such as First Avenue Mainroom, The Varsity Theatre, and The Ordway and has opened up for artists like Kehlani, Rico Nasty, Leikeli47, and many

more! NBC's mission has been to uplift and engage with their community through dance and

performance—paving a pathway into leadership and development as individuals and as a group. Currently, Zhane is focused on developing as an artist outside of New Black City. She's soon to release *Designers Made Original*, an online network blog centered around untold stories and artistic processes of the black and brown diaspora. Her goal is to capture and share the depths of tribulation and success—told through the lens of black and brown individuals. Zhané is currently working her 3rd season at Penumbra!



Patricia Brown, Choreographer

For 30 years, Patricia Brown has been active in the Twin Cities arts community as a dancer, instructor, choreographer, performer, movement consultant, and mentor. Some of her theater and dance choreography credits include, *A Raisin In The Sun, Grandchildren of the Buffalo Soldiers*, and *Sugar in Our Wounds* at Penumbra. She created choreography for the *Late Nite Series*, as well as for Terell Alvin McCraney's *Brother/Sister plays*, presented by Pillsbury House

Theater/Guthrie Theater, including, *Marcus or the Secret of Sweet*, which received the 2015 lvey Award for Outstanding Ensemble. She also created choreography for *Nina Simone: Four Women* with Park Square Theater, *365 Days/365 Plays* with Full Circle Theater, *Seven Guitars*, and *The School For Lies* with the BFA program at the University of Minnesota, and *Fences* with the University of Nevada Las Vegas. Patricia received the Educator of the Year Award from Macalester College in 2020. She received the Century Council Diverse Community Award in 2007, and the College of Continuing Education Distinguished Teaching Award in 2004 from the University of Minnesota. She was also an instructor with the Penumbra Theater Summer Institute for 26 years, and in 2013, they created the Patricia A. Brown scholarship in her honor. Her national credits include Jazz at Lincoln Center, NY, Guthrie Theater, MN, Lied Center for Performing Arts, NE, University of Michigan Men's Glee Club, MI Lincoln Memorial, DC, St. John the Divine, NY and the Center for Puppetry Arts, GA.



Gregory Horton, Costume Designer

Gregory J. Horton is an Associate Professor and Interim Director of Theatre of the Paul Robeson Theater, whose areas of concentration are Costume Design and Directing. Horton is on faculty at North Carolina A&T State University. Before his position at NCAT, he was tenured and taught at Saint Louis University for ten years designed such productions as *Clyde's*, *Phenomenal Mya*, *Simply Simone*, *Clydes*, *Blood at the Root*, *Respect*, *Trav'lin*, *Gee's Bend*, *Sweet Charity*, *Guess*

Who's Coming to Dinner, The Visit, A Woman from the Town, Something's Afoot, A Mid Summer Night's Dream, A Company of Wayward Saints, The Crucible, The Heiress, The Glass Menagerie, Dreamgirls, Foreigner, The Wiz, Colored Museum, Crowns, Fences, Tartuffe', Waiting to be Invited and My Fair Lady, vChristmas (Dec. 2019 and 2021), Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill (Oct. 2020), Crowns, Pretty Fire, A Funny Thing Happened on the way to the Forum, Nunsense, Ain't Misbehaving, Tambourines To Glory, Jesus Christ Super Star, Black Nativity and Godspell. He is also the 2017 recipient of the National Black Theatre Excellence in Costume Design Award. Horton received the Kennedy Center for Performing Arts' Gold Medallion Award this year in February 2023 and is happy to return to Penumbra Theatre as tonight's costume designer.



Deja Collins, Projections Designer

Deja Collins is a projections and media designer from Baltimore, Maryland. Specializing in film, motion graphics, and visual effects, Deja constantly seeks new opportunities to reimagine archival and visual information within immersive spaces. Her recent credits include *One in Two* at Mosaic Theatre; *Jardín Salvaje* at Gala Hispanic Theatre; and *By the Way, Meet Vera Stark, Black is Holy*, and *Get on your Good Foot* at The Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center. You can view more of her

work at dcllns.myportfolio.com.



Gregory Robinson**, Sound Designer

Gregory Robinson, a United Scenic Artists Local USA 829, IATSE Member, is an artist that paints with sound. His creative works are in local, regional, and national radio and television advertising; short films; documentaries; corporate video; and theatre. His work has been featured in an Emmy award-winning documentary, and he has been recognized by the San Francisco Bay Area Critics Circle, with a Sound

Design 'Excellence in Theatre Award' for *Water by the Spoonful*, and a nomination for *Proof*. Gregory recently composed music for the Aurora Theatre Company's production of *Paradise Blue*, and designed sound/music for The Marin Theatre Company's production of August Wilson's *Two Trains Running*, and for the Syracuse Stage Company's production of *Salt/City/Blues*.



Mina Kinukawa, Scene Designer

Design for MN theaters include: Penumbra, MN Opera, Theater Latté Da, Jungle Theater, Theater Mu, Full Circle Theater, New Native Theatre and Pillsbury House and Theatre. She has also worked in film & TV productions in Los Angeles, and designed scenery for regional theaters such as East West Players, EchoTheatre Company, Lodestone Theatre Company, Company of Angels, Milagro Theater, Profile Theatre, and Northwest Children's Theatre Company. Most

recently, she designed scenery for *Passage* (Pillsbury House Theatre), *Falsettos* (Theater Latté Da), *The Kung Fu Zombies Saga* (Theater Mu), and *The Song Poet* (MN Opera). She is an Assistant Professor of Theater and Dance at Macalester College in Saint Paul, MN.



Latrice Lovett, Lighting Designer

Latrice Lovett (M.F.A. UMKC, B.A. NCCU) resides in the triad area of North Carolina. She designs lighting for theatre, opera, concerts, dance, wedding/receptions, small events and live entertainment. She also has taught lighting at Duke Ellington School of the Art High School, Washington, DC for a few years in person and virtually. Since the pandemic, she has been working with different companies on her project L.I.T. (Lighting in Theatre), where she teaches the basics

of lighting and minimal design to novice theatre enthusiasts. Currently, she is creating lighting designs and working on other lighting projects under her company Lovett Lighting LLC. Other Credits: As You Like It, Stick Fly (The Playmakers Repertory); The Mountaintop, The Niceties (Heritage Theatre Festival), Five Guys Named Moe, Evita (Skylight Music Theatre), Savior Samuel, Gem of the Ocean, Jitney, Joe Turner's Come and Gone (Pittsburgh Playwrights).



Abbee Warmboe, Properties Designer

Abbee Warmboe is a freelance props designer based in Minneapolis. Past Penumbra shows include *The White Card*, *Pipeline*, *Brother's Paranormal*, *Benevolence*, *For Colored Girls*, and *This Bitter Earth*. Recent work includes *Falsettos* with Theater Latte Da and *Murder on the Orient Express* with Guthrie Theater, *The Root Beer Lady* with History Theater, *The Bull Jean Stories* with Pillsbury House. Abbee was a 2020-2021 McKnight Theater Artist Fellow at the Playwrights' Center.

CAST



Shá Cage*, Memori Brooks

Shá Cage is a renaissance artist who writes, directs and acts in theater and film. She has been called a changemaker and one of the leading artists of her generation. Her work has taken her across the U.S. to Japan, Africa, England, Bosnia and Canada. Her directing credits include 36 Yesses (Cornerstone Theater), Clare Baron's Dance Nation (Guthrie/UMN), Joselyn Bioh's School Girls (Arkansas Rep) and (Jungle Theater), Michael Bobbit's adaptation of Three Little

Birds (The Children's Theater), Benjamin Benne's Neighbors (MN History Theater), Brandon Jacobs-Jenkins' Everybody (Guthrie/UMN), Shavunda Horsley's BITCH (Bedlam Theater), Waterfront's The Viking and the Gazelle (Mixed Blood Theater) and Buttafly Precinct which she authored (Black Lives/ Black Words Festival). She was seen last on stage as Hermione in Ten Thousand Things Winter's Tale and Lady Capulet in The Guthrie Theater's Romeo and Juliet. Her published writings appear in Blues Vision, Locker Room Talk, Home and the anthology "A Moment of Silence" which she edited.



Comfort Dolo*, Memori Brooks

Comfort Dolo was born in Chattanooga, Tennessee and raised in friendly Fridley, Minnesota. She graduated from Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, MN, with double majors in Honors Theatre and Communication Studies. She went on a mini detour to Cleveland, Ohio, for graduate school at the Case Western Reserve University/ Cleveland Play House Master of Fine Arts in Acting Program (I know it's a mouthful!), but is back in all her glory! Credits at CPH include:

Into the Breeches (Ida Green); Antigone (Chorus); Pipeline (Jasmine u/s). Other selected credits: Guthrie Theatre: To Kill a Mockingbird (Church Choir/Ensemble). CPH/CWRU: Hay Fever (Sorel Bliss); Merchant of Venice (Jessica/Solanio); The Seagull (Sorin); Fifth of July (Shirley). She also created and performed a one-woman show, Diary of an Unapologetic Negro, based on her real life, using spoken word pieces from some of her favorite poets. In her free time, she loves to watch her two kitties (Cheesecake and Brandy) destroy her apartment, learn German, and watch Jeopardy! Shoutout to my wonderful Dolo FamBam, and my one and only, Jamsie. "People who are afraid to ask for what they want, don't get what they want." comfortdolo.com

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Penumbra is proud to stand beside Theater Mu, New Native Theatre, Pangea World Theater, and Teatro del Pueblo as a member of the Twin Cities Theatres of Color Coalition. The coalition formed to build knowledge, capacity, and take action around the challenges and opportunities of diversification in the American theatre.

