

Inside the Zoom:
Two Online One Acts



HAIR WAITING

Written by
Niccole Nero Gaines

Directed by
KJ Gilmer



November 12 - 21, 2020
www.play.pitt.edu

Inside the Zoom: Black and Blue / Hair Waiting

Written by **Niccole Nero Gaines**

Directed by **KJ Gilmer**

Production Team

Stage Manager

Lauren Scheller-Wolf

Scenic Designer

M.K. Hughes

Dialect and Accent Coach

Bria Walker

Sound Designer

Jenna Teplitzky

Costume Designer

KJ Gilmer

Lighting Designer

TJ Hays

Dramaturg (Black and Blue)

Samir Yellapragada

Dramaturg (Hair Waiting)

Missy Barbour

INSIDE THE ZOOM: TWO ONLINE ONE ACTS

“BLACK AND BLUE” / “HAIR WAITING”

is approximately 1 hour long

There will be a 2 minute intermission

Please be advised that language is used that
some may find offensive.



Pitt's **Year of Engagement** is a celebration of the work that's central to our mission: collaborating to confront the world's biggest challenges and mobilize toward a better, more equitable and just society for all.

About the Author

Niccole Nero Gaines

Niccole Nero Gaines was born in Queens, New York. She is a graduate of Morgan State University with a B.A. in Theatre Arts. Niccole's writing credits include the staged productions, "Last Dance", "Brownstone Blues" and "From The Heart of Hollis" for which she won the Arthur C. Lamb Playwriting Award. Her most recent production, "HAIRitage: The Journey of Sistahs with their Hair" enjoyed an off-Broadway premiere and toured for seven years until the pandemic.

In addition to plays, Niccole has written and produced independent web shows including the provocative webseries 'SexTea Ladies' and a short animated film entitled "[Emene and The Disappearing Spell](#)".

Niccole has also published the first two books of her children book series, [Emene the elephant and friends](#); Vol 1 - 'Emene moves to Africa' and Vol 2 - 'Emene goes to summer camp'.

Niccole started the company, **4 Love Productions**, to share positive, uplifting and entertaining stories about the African American experience. For more information about Niccole and her work, please visit 4LoveProductions.com



Note from the director:

Theatre has evolved from telling stories around the fire to big budget productions with the best of everything. The Pandemic changed it all; the lights went down, productions stopped, and theatres closed.

Theatre is experiencing another evolution. Through social media, mankind has found a way to continue to tell stories far and wide while peering into a computer screen, tablet, cell phone or laptop.

The theatre's storytellers, the playwrights, have adjusted to this format and are they writing work for the online platform that continues to examine the human condition. Niccole Nero Gaines' plays "Black and Blue", and "Hair Waiting", touch on these conditions in personal ways. These Zoom calls offer glimpses into discussions where we learn that the struggle is real, and having a dialogue is key to beginning the hard conversations that could teach us about one another.

I learned of "Hair Waiting" while doing YouTube research on my own hair. It was part of a co-production between Moxie Theatre and Common Ground theatres in San Diego. The evening was a series of one acts, written and directed by black women. I had missed the performance by one night, as luck would have it, due to technical issues the show was repeated on a night I could tune in to watch.

I am thrilled with our collaboration of Niccole Nero Gaines' work and I am eager to share it with you.

"Black and Blue" is a new play and as I would like to say, it is having a world premiere. Thank you for coming. I hope you enjoy the show!

KJ Gilmer

An Important Message:

Before we begin this stream of Miss You Like Hell Pitt Stages and the Department of Theatre Arts joins the call for all artists, cultural workers, public officials, educators, administrators, community leaders, organizers, and engaged community members to open all public events and gatherings with acknowledgment of the traditional Native inhabitants of the land.

We want to begin this first step of engagement by recognizing that this production was recorded on the traditional, ancestral lands of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy (also known as the Iroquois Confederacy), particularly the Seneca who were one of the five (and later six) Iroquois-language speaking tribes in the Confederacy, the Lenape (also known as the Delaware), the Shawnee, the Mingo, and earlier, the Osage, the Monongahela, the Hopewell, and others.

We are mindful that our lives here are possible because the land and lives of people native to this place were stolen. Colonialism and white supremacy have continually tried to erase Indigenous people of this land in the past and present. At this time there are no federally recognized Indigenous tribes in Pennsylvania due to colonialism displacement. Our lives here are also possible because generation upon generation (past, present, and future) of indigenous people in this nation and all over the world are respectful stewards of the earth and its resources.

More Information about this call, practice, and additional learning can be found at <https://usdac.us/nativeland>.

Thank you for gathering with us today.



BLACK

and

BLUE

Special Thanks

Brian Pope

Gabby M. H. Yearwood, PhD

Ken Bolden

Ricardo Vila-Roger

Jon Bupp

Hayden Gilmer



The Cast

Mr. Bryan Wali Jamal
Mr. Thomas Kevin H Moore
ADA Connors Josh Reed
Officer McLeary Finley Geist

The Company

Wali Jamal (Mr. Bryan) has spent the last four decades entertaining on a multitude of stages and venues in Pittsburgh. Was named the 2018 Pgh Post Gazette Performer of the Year for his portrayal of August Wilson in his one man show, *How I Learned What I Learned*. Mr. Jamal has the singular distinction of being the only actor in the world to have performed in that show in addition to all ten plays in Wilson's Ten Play American Century Cycle.

Kevin H Moore (Mr. Thomas) is thrilled to work with Pitt Stages for the first time. He is an actor/writer living and working in Pittsburgh. He has worked previously with Pittsburgh Playwrights, Throughline Theater, Pittsburgh Classic Players, PICT and Quantum. Special thanks to Brian Pope, the cast and crew.

Josh Reed (ADA Connors) Hailing from Norfolk, Virginia, Josh is a Pitt freshman who, while currently undeclared, plans to double major in theatre arts and political science. He's extremely excited for his Pitt Stages debut. Past performances include *Clue* (Colonel Mustard), *Anything Goes* (Moonface Martin), and *Mary Poppins* (Mr. Banks) in high school. Josh has also performed improv and sketch comedy at the Push Comedy Theatre since 2016.

Finley Geist (Officer McLeary) is excited to be a part of their first Pitt Stages production. Finley is a freshman at the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences. Previously Finley has been in productions of *Pippin*, *Chicago*, *The Crucible*, *The Laramie Project*, *Mary Poppins*, and more.

We would like to invite you to join us for a talkback following the show. The talkback moderator for both shows is **Dr. Gabby M.H. Yearwood**. Dr. Yearwood is the Department of Anthropology's Director of Undergraduate Studies with a secondary appointment in Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies (GSWS).

Below are the topics that will be discussed.

BLACK AND BLUE

Policing and the Black Community
The role of the ADA and Assistant ADA
Law and the Black Community

HAIR WAITING

Hair discrimination/Crown Act
Cultural appropriation and appreciation
Hairstyles in Culture

The talkback video is available at the Vimeo On Demand Streaming site.

Study Guides are available for more information on the topics of these two productions.

BLACK AND BLUE

By Samir Yellapragada
Undergraduate Student and Dramaturg for "Black and Blue"

HAIR WAITING

By Melissa Barbour
Undergraduate Student and Dramaturg for "Hair Waiting"
and KJ Gilmer
Lecturer and Costume Designer
University of Pittsburgh Theatre Arts Department

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Please consider donating to our department. It is only with your help that we are able to showcase our students and faculty while sharing the future of theatre within our regional community.

Your generous support helps to fund much of our programming throughout the year. This includes the production branch of our department, outreach programs that benefit various community organizations, teaching artists and guest artists residencies and workshops, and other educational theatre events we provide throughout the year.

We need your help more than ever to support these programs. There are many students on campus whose first experience with the theatre and the cultural community overall starts here.

Click [here](#) to make an online donation to the department.

When donating by check, use **THEATRE ARTS DEPARTMENT** designation in the “memo” section and send to the following address:

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HAIR WAITING



Special Thanks

Jennifer Thorn-MOXIE Theatre

Ashley Martin

Alexis Primus

Danica Moffitt

Tyler Cruz

Jess Rizzo



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stages

The Cast

Ma Bell	Kaylah Harley
Sandra	Dhael Monfiston
Becky	Lena Ruther
Naomi	Jermiya Gaines
Understudy	Barrie Wiener
Understudy	Olivia Basile

The Company

Olivia Basile (Understudy) is excited to be a part of this Pitt Stages mainstage production. She is a senior chemical engineering major with Spanish and French minors. Olivia studies acting at Playhouse West – Philadelphia and performed in the Pitt Stages production of *Miss You Like Hell* (Pearl).

Jermiya Gaines (Naomi) is a freshman here at Pitt and is excited to be taking on her first show with Pitt Stages. She plans to continue her career at Pitt as a linguistics/theater arts double major. Jermiya previously performed in Davidson Academy’s theater program, as well as with Lackland Theatre Company. Her previous performances include *As You Like It* (Celia) and *Something You Didn’t Know*, an original musical (Ms. Daisy).

Kaylah Harley (Ma Bell) is excited to make her debut in her first Pitt Stages mainstage production of “Hair Waiting”. She is a sophomore pursuing a major in the theatre arts and a minor in africana studies and is on the pre-med track in hopes of going to medical school in the future.

Dhael Monfiston (Sandra) is a sophomore English writing major with a minor in theatre arts and Portuguese. This is her first Pitt Stages play, and she is very excited to make her debut. Dhael has previous acting experience competing in Shakespeare competitions through the English-Speaking Union. Her favorite role has been playing Cleopatra.

Lena Ruther (Becky) is thrilled to make her debut in her first University of Pittsburgh mainstage production! She is a first-year student with an intended theater arts major and a possible film and/or English literature minor. She is so excited to be a part of such an incredible show with a wonderful cast and crew.

Barrie Wiener (Understudy) is excited to make her Pitt Stages debut! She is a sophomore international and area studies, politics and philosophy, and French major. Barrie is also on the Pitt Figure Skating Team, and enjoys dance.



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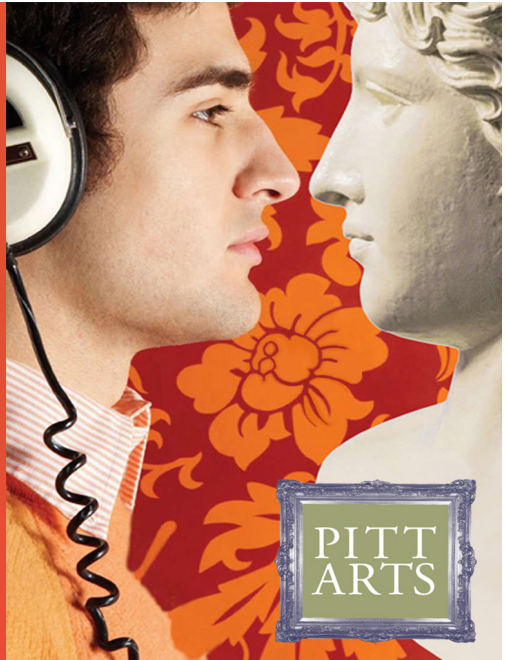
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Production Crew

Pitt Stages Production Staff

Costume Shop Manager (Interim) Ricky Campbell
Technical Director..... Kyle Cameron
Head Electrician/Shop Foreperson..... Kyle Cameron
Prop Shop Manager M.K. Hughes

Director KJ Gilmer
Stage Manager Lauren Scheller-Wolf
Assistant Stage Manager Megan Franco
Dialect and Accent Coach Bria Walker
Dramaturg (Black and Blue) Samir Yellapragada
Dramaturg (Hair Waiting)..... Missy Barbour
Costume Designer..... KJ Gilmer
Scenic Designer..... MK Hughes
Assistant Scenic Designer..... Jillian Werbisky
Lighting Designer..... TJ Hays
Sound Designer..... Jenna Teplitzky
Faculty Advisor Cindy Croot

The Production Team

Melissa Barbour (Dramaturg) is thrilled to be experiencing another new role backstage before graduating this December. She is glad to be working on theatre even when we cannot gather together and is proud for this to be her last Pitt Stages production.

Megan Franco (Assistant Stage Manager) is very excited to take part in her first virtual production at Pitt! She is a sophomore theatre arts/psychology double major, and is pursuing a history minor and REEES certificate. Prior to this, she worked on Pitt MTC production of *Merrily We Roll Along* (assistant stage manager).

KJ Gilmer (Director / Costume Designer) Ms. Gilmer is the Costume Design Lecturer in the Department of Theatre Arts. Previously, she has directed and designed costumes for Pitt Stages productions of

Pearl Cleage's *Flyin' West* and Lynn Nottage's *Intimate Apparel*. She is pleased to be directing, *Inside the Zoom: Two Online Once Acts* by Niccole Nero Gaines.

She earned her BA in French at West Chester and an MFA in Costume Design at Boston University. She has traveled extensively designing costumes for Opera, Theatre and Dance. Her national and regional theatre credits: City Theatre Company, St. Michael's Playhouse of Vermont, Philadelphia Shakespeare Festival, Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia's University of the Arts, Arden Theatre Company, Everyman Theatre Company of Baltimore.

Currently, Ms. Gilmer is obtaining an education in the field of intimacy choreography with Theatrical Intimacy Educators and Intimacy Coordinators and Directors. Her studies and training in best practices when staging nudity, intimacy, and sexual assault assist with classrooms, rehearsals, and all production areas in being brave, creative spaces, especially for BIPOC students. Her research in intimacy, also examines "touch" as it pertains to the costume designer, actor, and costume.

TJ Hays (Lighting Designer) is excited to be working on another show during this Pandemic. He worked on *She Kills Monsters: Virtual Realms* (streaming technical). He is a junior theatre arts major, hoping to become a concert lighting designer in the future. His past work includes *Ordinary Days* (master electrician), *Oblivion* (lighting designer) and *next to normal* (lighting designer) as well as work for Pitt Tonight and Redeye (lighting). He looks forward to future Pitt Stages productions!

M.K. Hughes (Scenic Designer) is a graduate of Southern Illinois University with a MFA in Scenic Design for the Theater. She is currently a visiting artist in scenic properties and design here at Pitt. For the past 6 years she has been working as a freelance set designer, props artisan, and scenic painter at various locations, including: Point Park University (design), Prime Stage (props & design), The New Hazlett Theater (design), the Alabama and Oregon Shakespeare Festivals (painting), McLeod Summer Playhouse (props & design), and Kansas State University (design).

Lauren Scheller-Wolf (Stage Manager) is thrilled to stage manage her first show at Pitt! Lauren is a junior theatre arts and English writing double major, with a potential minor in history. Previous Pitt Stages credits include *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Into the Woods* (crew), and *She Kills Monsters: Virtual Realms* (Lily/Lilith). Lauren has also acted with several theatre companies around the Pittsburgh area, including Prime Stage and Pittsburgh Shakespeare in the Parks.

Jenna Teplitzky (Sound Designer) is happy to be in her final semester at Pitt. Throughout her years at Pitt, she has studied performance, directing, playwriting, sound design and projection design. Her most notable performances and designs were in "Roustabout: The Great Circus Train Wreck!", *She Kills Monsters*, *The Wolves* and various Redeye Theatre Project productions. Last summer, she interned remotely at the Heinz History Center and studied Yiddish Theatre in Pittsburgh.

Bria Walker (Dialect and Accent Coach/Monica's Voice) is an assistant professor of performance and Head of the MFA Performance Pedagogy Program at Pitt. Directing: *Dog Sh*t (B.U.S. 11)*; *for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf*, *Surreality: an evening of sh*t that may be deep*, *The Every 28 Hours Plays Project* (SUNY New Paltz); *Avenue Q* (SUNY New Paltz & University of Pittsburgh); staged reading *Off With Her Maidenhead* (The Pitch series for Merry-Go-Round Playhouse); co-director of *Crowns* (Fleetwood-Jourdain Theatre). Asst. Directing: *Sunset Baby*, *Black Ballerina*, *From the Mississippi Delta*, *Topdog/Underdog*, *Sweet, Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill* (Fleetwood-Jourdain Theatre). www.briawalker.com

Jillian Werbisky (Assistant Scenic Designer) is a junior studying for a psychology and administration of justice double major with minors in theatre arts and French. This is her third Pitt Stages productions serving as an assistant scenic designer. Jillian cannot wait for what the next year holds. Her previous work includes *The Wolves* (assistant scenic designer) and *Antigone* (scenic designer).

Samir Yellapragada (Dramaturg) is excited to make his debut in his first Pitt Stages production. He is a senior anthropology and natural sciences double major. Samir will be working on collecting research

regarding the prominent themes of “Black and Blue” as well as creating discussion questions for the talk back after the show. He will be taking acting lessons next term and hopes to audition for a mainstage production next semester.



The CROWN Act

Creating a **R**espectful and **O**pen **W**orld for **N**atural **H**air

The CROWN Act, which stands for “*Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair*,” is a law that prohibits race-based hair discrimination, which is the denial of employment and educational opportunities because of hair texture or protective hairstyles including braids, locs, twists or bantu knots.

First introduced in California in January 2019 and signed into law on July 3, 2019, the inaugural **CROWN Act** expanded the definition of race in the Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA) and state Education Code, to ensure protection in workplaces and in K-12 public and charter schools. Since then, **The CROWN Act** has galvanized support from federal and state legislators in the movement to end hair discrimination nationwide.

The CROWN Coalition is an alliance of organizations, including founding members Dove, National Urban League, Color Of Change and Western Center on Law and Poverty, that are dedicated to the advancement of anti-discrimination legislation across the United States. With the help of a diverse array of organizations in the social justice, business, legal, and education sectors, the **CROWN Coalition** has had tremendous success elevating the public narrative around this important issue and inspiring a movement to end hair bias and discrimination.

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University of Pittsburgh

Department of Theatre Arts

ABOUT

The Department of Theatre Arts at the University of Pittsburgh is an accredited member of the National Association of Schools of Theatre and offers BA, MFA, and PhD degrees in Theatre Arts. The Department believes in a philosophy of theatre education based on the integration of theory and practice, academic and creative work, and educational and professional theatre.

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Department Chair	Annmarie Duggan
Director of Graduate Studies	Michelle Granshaw
Director of Undergraduate Studies	Gianni Downs
Head of MFA in Performance Pedagogy	Bria Walker
Co-Heads of Design Technology	Gianni Downs and Annmarie Duggan
Head of History/Literature/Criticism	Michelle Granshaw
Head of Performance	Cynthia Croot
Additional Faculty	Kathy George, Karen Gilmer, Patrick McKelvey, Becki Toth, and Ricardo Vila-Roger
Visiting Faculty	Jianyu Huo and Delilah Picart
Teaching Artists-in-Residence	M.K. Hughes, Chosky Teaching Artist Kelly Trumbull, Richard E. Rauh Teaching Artist
Professor Emeriti	W. Stephen Coleman, Buck Favorini Don Mangone and Bruce McConachie

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Operations Manager	Ashley Martin
Graduate Student Services Administration	Josh Oliver
Marketing Coordinator	Connie Anne Markiw
Marketing Assistants	Samantha Rose Megan Parr and Gabriella Mizera

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Costume Shop Manager (Interim)	Ricky Campbell
Technical Director	Eben Alguire
Head Electrician/Shop Foreperson	Kyle Cameron
Prop Shop Manager	M.K. Hughes

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Directed by Tyler Lentz



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Directed by KJ Gilmer
March 2021

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Written by Jen Silverman
Directed by Julia Kreutzer
February 2021

Carrie and Francine

Written by Ruby Rae Spiegel
Directed by Rebecca Hobart
April 2021