



for colored girls who have considered suicide / when the rainbow is enuf

By Ntozake Shange

Directed by Dr. Tawnya Pettiford-Wates

Choreographed by Christine Catherine Wyatt

E.C. Mabie Theatre | UI Theatre Building

Approximate run time is 1 hour 30 minutes. There is no intermission.

Please be advised that this production includes mature themes, mature language, sexual content that includes violence and assault that may be triggering.

Historic and groundbreaking, Ntozake Shange's *for colored girls who have considered suicide / when the rainbow is enuf* is a choreopoem that celebrates womanhood and discovery through an inimitable combination of storytelling, poetry, dance, and song. Through monologues and conversation, these women weave a tapestry of joy and triumph despite tragedy as they discover their own rainbows. Directed by Dr. Tawnya Pettiford-Wates, a cast member of the NY Shakespeare Festival's original award-winning Broadway production and First National Tour and choreographed by Christine Catherine Wyatt, *for colored girls...* leads us on a journey to find hope after the storm.

Special thanks to the Stage Management cohort, Melissa Turner, and Sam Paradis for all the help and support throughout this process.

"for colored girls who have considered suicide / when the rainbow is enuf" is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc. www.concordtheatricals.com

Performances:

Friday, November 8 at 8 p.m.

Saturday, November 9 at 8 p.m.

Sunday, November 10 at 2 p.m.

Thursday, November 14 at 8 p.m.

Friday, November 15 at 8 p.m.

Saturday, November 16 at 8 p.m.

Tickets:

Purchase your tickets in advance through Hancher Box Office by calling 319-335-1160 or online through [their website](#).

The Box Office at the Theatre Building opens one hour prior to the performance, with tickets on an as-available basis, unless the production is sold out.

Individuals with disabilities are encouraged to attend all University of Iowa sponsored events. If you are a person with a disability who requires a reasonable accommodation in order to participate in this program, please contact the Department of Theatre Arts at 319-335-2700 in advance of the event.

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<https://concordtheatricals.com/resources/protecting-artists>

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Director's Note

The very first performance of this classic legendary piece of theatre was a series of narrative poetic monologues that would later become the critically acclaimed choreopoem *for colored girls who have considered suicide / when the rainbow is enuf* by Ntozake Shange. The original poems were performed at a women's bar outside Berkley, California in 1974, fifty years ago, with four other artists including the playwright herself, a couple of musicians, and a dancer. Ntozake's seminal piece of dramatic text literally transformed the NY theatre scene when it premiered on Broadway in 1976. It wasn't a drama, comedy, musical, or any other form of theatre that had been previously characterized. It was a choreopoem as identified by the author herself. It was raw, authentic storytelling that finally gave the voices of Black women an opportunity to be heard without the window dressing of an overly produced theatrical event. The stage was almost bare, the women had one simple elegant colorful satin crepe dress with no frills. They each stood on the stage barefoot and real. It was a theatrical phenomenon. Fifty years later it still is.

In 1977, this play transformed my life and started me on my journey of self-discovery, self-determination and liberation. It was this play that challenged me to have the courage to be who I am and affirmed my identity as "a colored girl". It made me recognize that the process of becoming an artist is a lifelong pursuit. Several generations of artists since have had the opportunity to be transformed by the brilliance of the activist poet, artist, and feminist scholar Ntozake Shange of 1974. *for colored girls...* has a legacy and this work is meant to be a gift. It is meant to be witnessed and not merely passively watched. It is intended to be a challenge and an inspiration. May you receive it in the spirit it is given.

With courage and love,
Dr. T

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MEET THE CAST



Lady in Yellow | ASHA KELLER

Asha Keller is a recent graduate of the University of Iowa's biology and theatre arts departments and is thrilled to be back in this piece. Some shows you may have seen her in at the University of Iowa include *BLKS* (2022), *Lil G: A Gatsby Remix* (2023), *Men On Boats* (2023), *West Illinois Glass House* (2024) and *In the Red and Brown Water* (2024). Asha would like to thank her friends and family for their continuous support, her educators for their compassion and guidance, and her beloved cast and crew for making this journey unforgettable. She is honored to have the opportunity to be herself on the stage!



Lady in Orange | NIYATI DESHPANDE*

Niyati Deshpande is a fourth-year undergraduate student double-majoring in theatre arts on the music theatre track and educational studies & human relations, and minoring in psychology. She is so honored to be part of this journey. Favorite credits include Natasha in *Natasha, Pierre & the Great Comet of 1812*, Love in *Everybody*, and Connie in *Dance Nation*. Thank you to her loved ones and mentors for their continuous support, as well as the cast, crew, Christine, and Dr. T for seeing her and being seen.

"Where there is a woman there is magic." -Ntozake Shange

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Lady in Pink | SOPHIA POLKING*

Sophia Polking is a second-year undergraduate student at the University of Iowa. She is double majoring in social justice and health studies on the premedical track and minoring in theatre arts and chemistry. This show is Sophia's UI theatre debut, and she has spent the entire process in awe of the talent and wisdom of the ladies around her. Sophia would like to thank her family and friends for their unwavering support and you for coming to see the show!



Lady in Red | ZAFYRE SEXTON-TURNER

Zafyre Sexton-Turner is thrilled to bring to life the stories of *for colored girls...* Beginning her career as an Atlanta-based actor, her credits include Leading Player in *Pippin*, Ariel in *The Tempest*, and ensemble in *AIDA*. Currently an Iowa City community member, she is grateful to participate in University of Iowa theatre. She would like to thank her husband, Joshua.

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MEET THE CREATIVE TEAM



Director / Video Performance Artist | DR. TAWNYA PETTIFORD-WATES §

Tawnya Pettiford-Wates, Ph.D. Professor of Acting and Directing Pedagogy at Virginia Commonwealth University and the Co-Artistic Director & Founder of The Conciliation Project, a non-profit social justice theatre

company www.theconciliationproject.org. Dr. T is a playwright, director, actor, poet, and writer. She has appeared in the New York Shakespeare Festival's Broadway production of *for colored girls who have considered suicide / when the rainbow is enuf* performing in both the 1st national and international touring companies. Her television, film, industrial, voice over, and commercial credits

are extensive. Favorite directing projects include *uncle tom:deconstructed* for The Conciliation Project www.theconciliationproject.org, *PASSING STRANGE* for Firehouse Theatre, *The Niceties* for The Conciliation LAB, and *FENCES* for the Virginia Rep all to critical acclaim. Most recently, "WHITESPLAINING" a collaboration with Theatre VCU and The Conciliation Project. The work of The Conciliation Project has intentionally engaged communities around issues of race, racism, and historic and systemic oppression. Fun fact: She's featured voice talent for the video game HALO. She's a featured scholar in *Black Acting Methods: critical approaches*, a best seller on Amazon. Her chapter "The Conciliation Project as a Social Experiment: Behind the Mask of Uncle Tom-ism and the Performance of Blackness" was featured in an anthology titled, *African American Arts, Activism, Aesthetics and Futurity*, edited by Dr. Sharrell D. Lockett. A sampling of Dr. T's articles, presentations, and workshops can be found at www.coveringtheground.com.

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Choreographer | CHRISTINE CATHERINE WYATT

Christine C. Wyatt is a choreographer, dancer/performer, and facilitator of movement experiences. Originally from Baltimore, MD, she started her dance training at the age of 9. With a decade of performance experience and training in music, theatre, and dance, Christine went on to earn her BFA in Dance & Choreography from Virginia Commonwealth University. For the past 10 years, she's been teaching, choreographing, and performing with multi-generational communities and youth throughout the U.S.

Her work with MK Abadoo/MKArts, Alicia Díaz, and Dr. Tawnya Pettiford-Wates demonstrate her Africanist movement values and the deep influence

of art as resistance. Her passion for anti-racist, community based work keeps her interest in the performing arts alive. This iteration of *for colored girls who have considered suicide / when the rainbow is enuf* at the University of Iowa marks 5 years of collaborating with the director, Dr. Tawnya Pettiford-Wates. Choreographing *PASSING STRANGE* (2018), *Les Blancs* (2021), *Whitesplaining* (2022), and several other productions directed by Dr. T were a joy and this production is a rite of passage. It has been an honor working with this cast of inspiring Black women and Women of Color.



Intimacy Director | CRISTINA GOYENECHÉ

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Dramaturg | POONAM DHIR**

Poonam Dhir is a queer playwright, poet, Punjabi descendent, and settler currently based in Iowa City, where they are an MFA candidate in playwriting and a 2023-24 Iowa Arts Fellow at the Iowa Playwrights Workshop. Poonam's work explores identity, trauma, memory, and the relationship between belief and belonging. They contemplate themes of migration, displacement, and loss. They are the recipient of a 2022 Lambda Literary Fellowship in Playwriting and a finalist for the 2021 PEN Canada New Voices Award, Poetry. Poonam is an Artist-in-Residence at Infinithéâtre and was selected to participate in Nightwood Theatre's 2022-23 Write From the

Hip Program led by Donna-Michelle St. Bernard. You can read their latest pieces in *The Capilano Review*, *Vallum*, *Contemporary Verse 2*, *PRISM International* and *Best New Poets*.



Stage Manager | MEENAKSHI CHINMAI**

Meenakshi is a third-year MFA stage manager. Her love for theatre started from acting in several children's plays, but things took a turn and her passion for stage management started when she met her mentor Dr. Terry John Converse. She is very happy and proud to be a part of the UIowa stage management cohort. She is very grateful to her mother Charu for being such a strong influence in her life and supporting her in pursuing a career in theatre.

She is grateful to be a part of such an amazing legacy play. She extends her heartfelt gratitude to her mentors Melissa Turner, Sam Paradis, Briana Maxwell, Bryon Winn. She is grateful for all the support from her friends on the team Jeffrey Oakley, Bella Fortunato, and Cj. Johnson. Meenakshi is extremely grateful for her friends Savanha and Maggie for supporting her in every way and being a strong grounding force throughout this process. Lastly, she would like to thank her ASM Reese Morgan for being such a great team mate and creating such a joyful and supportive environment. **Enjoy the Show!**

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Scenic Designer | CJ JOHNSON**



Costume Designer | I.M. FORTUNATO**

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Lighting Designer / Media Designer | **JEFFREY OAKLEY****



Sound Designer | **VICTOR MALDONADO**

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Voice/Dialect Coach | CAROLINE CLAY



Voice/Dialect Coach | MARY MAYO

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MEET THE CREATIVE TEAM

IOWA

Theatre Arts

Choral Director / Composer of "I found god in myself" | MAKEDA MCCREARY



Assistant Stage Manager | REESE MORGAN

Reese Morgan is a recent graduate from the University of Iowa theatre arts and journalism & mass communication programs. She has spent her time post-graduation working as a freelance theatre artist in the area. Her recent productions as a lighting designer include *Legally Blonde & Newsies Jr.* with Waterloo Community/Blackhawk Children's Theatre, and *It's a Wonderful Life: A Radio Play* with Riverside Theatre. As a stage manager, Reese has recently worked on *Herein Lies the Truth* and *The Trip to Bountiful* at Riverside Theatre, and acted as both Stage Manager and Lighting Designer for *Black Women Walking* with seek first entertainment.

Reese currently works at Hancher Auditorium and the University of Iowa in the Theatre Arts Props Department. She is excited to be back and working with the university and is very thankful for the mentorship and support from Melissa Turner and Maggie McClellan.

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Assistant Lighting Designer | COLIN KIERNAN*

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MEET THE CREW

Deck Crew Captain	Alice Conroy*
Wardrobe Crew Captain	E'mma Camara*
Light Board Operator	Jacob Licht*
QLab Operator/SBO	Tony Nguyen*
Run Crew – Deck	Zach Douglas* Charlie Duffy* Maddie Rodriguez*
Run Crew – Wardrobe	Audrey Michaels* Jenna Schnellbacher* Zoe Nolte*

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