

# unaccompanied



by **Helaina Michele**

directed by **Phyllis E. Griffin & Dexter Zollicoffer**

**May 5 - 14, 2023**

In the **Healy Theatre** | [theatre.depaul.edu](http://theatre.depaul.edu)

**THE  
THEATRE  
SCHOOL**

at DePaul University



AVIS THEATRE \$ 2.9

a LOOK INTO THE THEATRE SCHOOL OF DEPAUL

KEEP THE TICKETS IN THE MOUNTAIN C. 14820 2

THE THEATRE SCHOOL OF DEPAUL UNIVERSITY (TS) educates, trains, and inspires students of theater in a conservatory setting that is rigorous, disciplined, culturally diverse, and that strives for the highest level of professional skill and artistry. A commitment to diversity and equality in education is central to our mission. As an integral part of the training, The Theatre School produces public programs and performances at a wide repertoire of plays—classic, contemporary, and of great—that challenge, entertain, stimulate the imagination. We seek to enhance a intellectual and cultural literacy community, our city, and our profession.

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- 80+ year tradition and a professional focus
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- Complete offering of all program disciplines
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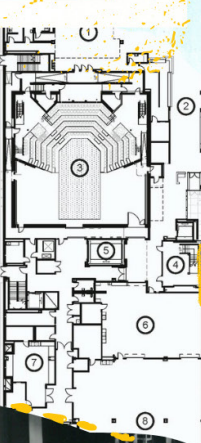
The Theatre School of DePaul University (TS) educates, trains, and inspires students of theater in a conservatory setting that is rigorous, disciplined, culturally diverse, and that strives for the highest level of professional skill and artistry. A commitment to diversity and equality in education is central to our mission. As an integral part of the training, The Theatre School produces public programs and performances at a wide repertoire of plays—classic, contemporary, and of great—that challenge, entertain, stimulate the imagination. We seek to enhance a intellectual and cultural literacy community, our city, and our profession.



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The Theatre School DEPAUL UNIVERSITY

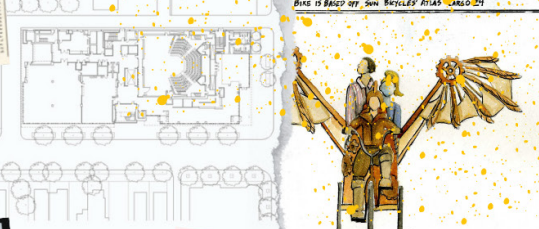


- 1 THEATRE
- 2 MONUMENTAL STAIR
- 3 FREIGHT ELEVATOR ACCESS TO BLACK BOX THEATER
- 4 PAINT SHOP
- 5 PROP SHOP
- 6 SCENE SHOP

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TO OPEN BY A PROVISION THE BIRD AND TWO PERSONS ARE CONTROLLED BY TWO PROSESSORS... SHOULD BE ABLE TO MOVE AT TWO POINTS... UNLESS SHOWN AT THE "ELEVATOR" AND A FULL BALL POINT AT THIS TO BE AS LIGHT AND ALTERNATE AS POSSIBLE... THIS IS BASED OFF SUN BICYCLES ATLAS (LARGO 24)



THEATRE SCHOOL, DEPAUL UNIVERSITY - GRC

P-3 HERMAN AND THE SEX OF DEPAUL UNIVERSITY PERKS DISSEMINATED BY C. GILMAN MARCH 2010

- The Theatre School at DePaul University presents -

# *unaccompanied*

by Helaina Michele  
with Original Music by Morgan Dudaryk

Directors - Phyllis E. Griffin & Dexter Zollicoffer

Scenic Designer - Regina García

Costume Designer - Megan Pahlow

Lighting Designer - Aidan McLeod

Sound Designer - Morgan Dudaryk

Technical Director - Tim Combs

Dramaturgs - Camille Rose Pugliese & Gena Trevyus

Stage Manager - Alivia Arizaga

**May 5-14, 2023**

The Theatre School at DePaul University  
The Sondra A. and Denis Healy Theatre  
2350 N. Racine Ave. Chicago, IL 60614



[theatre.depaul.edu](http://theatre.depaul.edu)

*unaccompanied* is produced by The Theatre School's annual New Playwrights Series. The program seeks to bring audiences a world premiere play written by a graduating Theatre School student.

# CAST

Colby .....	Chika Andrene Brown
Figment #2 .....	Carl Collins
Aunt Cameron/Amelia/Neighbor .....	Eva Jerkins
Aiden .....	DeVaughn Loman
Figment #1 .....	Kobe Mehki
Sammie .....	Danoeh Renaud

## Content Warning:

This production contains the use of haze, flashing lights, and abrupt loud sounds.

# PRODUCTION STAFF

Assistant Costume Designer .....	Michelle Escobedo
Assistant Costume Shop Manager .....	Juno Pacheco
Assistant Director .....	Marisa Elizabeth
Assistant Lighting Designer .....	Sydney Bax
Assistant Stage Manager .....	Shreya Khanna, Audrey Terhune
Assistant Technical Director .....	Ben Melton, Avery Spellmeyer
Associate Scenic Designer .....	Trenton Jones
Associate Sound Designer .....	Ava Berry
Carpenter .....	Aspen Lear
First Hand .....	Nora Dellifield, Abeline Glenzinski
House Manager .....	Austin Cantwell
Lead Carpenter .....	Avery Spellmeyer
Lighting Programmer .....	Joseph Nelson
Production Electrician .....	Karina Osbourne
Props Artisan .....	Eli Wallow
Props Director .....	Sam Lancaster
Stitcher .....	Grace Koehler, Leo Mroczek, Lim Park, Riley Trzeciak
Wig and Makeup Coordinator .....	Molly McQuarry

HPR Crew .....	Morgan Crump, Finn Januskevicius, Isabella Reyes, Katherine Shuert
Lighting Crew .....	Sydney Bax, Joyce Lee, Joseph Nelson
Set/Props Crew .....	Reed Brooks, Sofia Fillon, Aspen Lear
Sound Crew .....	Chase Grunden
Wardrobe Crew .....	Austin Beringer, Evelyn Clark, Zakaria Senan
Wig & Makeup Crew .....	Sophia Harley

# ADVISORS

Lighting Design Advisor .....	Christine A. Binder
Sound Design Advisor .....	Toy Deiorio
Costume Design Advisor .....	Anna Wooden
Costume Technology Advisor .....	Maggie Hofmann
Dramaturgy Advisor .....	Rachel Shtier
Theatre Technology Advisor .....	Jen Seleznow
Wig & Makeup Advisor .....	Erin Kennedy Lunsford
Stage Management Advisor .....	Chris Freeburg

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

I have always held a special place in my heart for a new works. They most often directly reflect the world we're living in. When I first came across Helaina's *unaccompanied*, I was in awe of its wit, its spectacle, its music- its everything. It reminded of my time as a student and being instructed on the elements needed to create Greek tragedy. My quick Google search turned up these four items:

- 1) Trilogies and Three act Structures
- 2) Off-Stage Violence and Action
- 3) A mix of Singing, Speech, and Dance,
- 4) A mix of Human Character and Deities usually with a flawed hero.

With the exception of the three acts, *unaccompanied* checked all the boxes. There was something utterly "complete" about the piece. I could have been reading something by Sophocles or Aristophanes. It was that good! On the other hand, my mind also drifted to an obscure television show of my late 70's, early 80's youth, named *Soap*. It was also about two families connected by blood and the things they did to hold on to their family. Even with the outlandish story lines, the first openly gay character as a series regular, and a ventriloquist dummy who could be lecherous or treacherous all in the same episode, *Soap* confirmed week after week, that no matter the situation, the family will always pull together. In my first discussion with Helaina, I kept saying that I thought the play was all about love. Yes, there are domestic issues, and shattered childhoods, but underneath it all, it's just a family unit that wants to love each other and be loved in return.

-Dexter

## DRAMATURGY NOTE

Parentification is an invisible form of childhood trauma, central to the plot of *unaccompanied*. Though the term was first coined in 1997, it's only been within the last ten years that psychologists have started credibly exploring this topic. In a 2012 study conducted by researchers at Columbia University, it is defined as, "the process through which children are assigned the role of an adult, taking on both emotional and functional responsibilities that typically are performed by the parent." In more simple terms, the child assumes the role of the parent, assuming more responsibilities than other children their age. In return, the parent becomes dependent on their child for things they are not equipped to handle.

There are two major forms of parentification – instrumental and emotional. Instrumental parentification occurs when the child takes on many of the 'functional' duties of the parent which include things like, "shopping, paying bills, cooking meals for the family, and taking care of the general logistics of running a household." As the play develops, Sammie takes on many of the functional responsibilities of her mother Colby- waking her up, getting her ready for the day, and making dinner. If she takes on these responsibilities, we can assume that she is responsible for much more. Emotional parentification is a result of the parent depending on the child to fulfill many of their own emotional and psychological needs. Sammie provides support to her mother in times of distress. Ultimately, Sammie is unable to develop healthy ways of managing her feelings because she grew up focusing on ways to serve her mother's.

The study's conclusion finds parentification has negative lasting effects. It not "disrupts identity development and personality formation, but further affects interpersonal relationships." Sammie finds comfort in her imaginary friends, The Figments, but has trouble relating to her own peers. It may also lead to more cases of mental illness, substance abuse, and further attachment issues. It contributes to a nasty cycle of pain, represented within the play's nearly cyclical structure.

*unaccompanied* complexly portrays parentification and its consequences, but one of the things that makes the play most striking is its inclusion of love. We are invited to watch Sammie and Colby attempt to heal their past selves, connecting the present to Sammie's turbulent childhood. And yet, as the two continue to struggle in the now; we witness the seeds of healing, and the start to two people beginning to truly agree to be there for each other. While this play is cyclical, we are left with the possibility that perhaps this cycle of trauma can come to an end. Or maybe, a new cycle, one of healing and support, can begin for the first time.



## BIOGRAPHIES

**Chika Andrene Brown [she/her]** (*Colby*) BFA3/ Acting. Chika is from New York and enjoys theatre as much as she does writing scripts and spoken word. Her Theatre School credits include *By the Way*, *Meet Vera Stark* (Vera Stark), *Hedda Gabler* (Thea Elevated), and *The Madness of Heracles* (Ensemble).

**Carl Collins [he/him]** (*Figment #2*) BFA4/ Acting. Carl is from Houston, Texas. His Theatre School credits include *Our Lady of 121st Street* (Flip), *Tall Enough* (Kamal), and *Three Antarticas* (Ernest Shackleton).

**Eva Jerkins [she/her]** (*Aunt Cameron/Amelia/ Neighbor*) MFA1/ Acting. Eva is an actor, dancer, and singer from Columbus, Ohio. She will be making her main stage debut in *unaccompanied*. Her acting credits include *Fantasyland Theater's Tale of the Lion King*, *Lifetime's Surviving Compton*, and *BET's American Gangster: Trap Queens*. Other credits include *The Millennium Tour*, *Offset*, *Halsey*, *Aloe Blacc*, and *The Singers of Soul*.

**Kobe Mehki [he/they]** (*Figment #1*) BFA3/ Acting. Kobe is an actor and singer from Aurora, Colorado. His Theatre School credits include *Vinegar Tom* (Betty), *She Kills Monsters* (Lily) and *After Juliet* (Alice). When he isn't onstage you can find Kobe in the studio singing and recording original music.

**Danoeh Renaud [she/her]** (*Sammie*) BFA3/ Acting. Danoeh is a transfer student from Pembroke Pines Florida. Previous credits include *Tartuffe* (Dorine), *A Bright Room Called Day* (Anabella Gotchling), *Goosebumps The Musical*, and *After Juliet* (Rhona).

**Helaina Michele (Coggs) [she/her]** (*Playwright*) BFA4/Playwriting. Helaina is from Lehigh Valley, Pennsylvania. In June 2022 she was awarded the Samuel G. Roberson Next Up Fellowship at Congo Square Theatre Company. Her satirical short play *Online Dating: A Not So Safe Space for Black Girls Looking to Exist* was read during Congo Square's Festival on the Square (June 2022). She has adapted her short play into a full length which will have a reading at Congo Square this June. Helaina has worked with theatres in San Francisco, Pennsylvania, and across Chicagoland as a playwright, dramaturg, literary and casting associate (such as Playwrights Foundation, Rivendell Theatre Ensemble, Victory Gardens, and Congo Square). Her writing explores whimsy, humor, twisting, and warping as characters are thrown into the arena of the stage as their lives begin to unravel. Helaina is very excited to share the world of *unaccompanied* with you all!

**Phyllis E. Griffin** (*Director*) Phyllis is a Certified Feldenkrais Practitioner® and Certified Lessac voice and speech teacher who has taught, directed and performed for many years at the university level and professionally. Recently she coached *The African Mean Girls Play*, the Broadway-bound musical *Paradise Square* and performed on television's *The Redline*. She was invited in 2022 to perform the role of MLK in

*New Morning for the World* for DePaul's School of Music. She also coached a singing chorus for the Lyric Opera's *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*, a Chicago premiere production.

**Dexter Zollicoffer [he/him]** (*Director*) Dexter is a native Virginian, alum of The Theatre School, and a proud Chicago actor for the past 30 years. As an actor, Dexter was last seen in *Lady From the Sea* at Court Theatre. Other Court Theatre appearances include *King Headley II*, *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*, *Electra*, *Water by the Spoonful* and *The Mystery Cycle: Creation and Passion*. Other credits include *Charm* at Northlight Theatre (Jeff Award for Actor in a Principle Role), as well as work at Goodman, Steppenwolf, Victory Gardens, Berkeley Rep, McCarter Theatre, Seattle Rep and Alabama Shakespeare Festival. TV/Film appearances include a recurring role on HBO Max's *Southside*, *Joe Pera Talks to You*, *Easy*, *Chicago Med*, *Chicago Fire*, *Detroit 1-8-7*, and *The Killing of Kenneth Chamberlain*. He is a 2011 recipient of The Spirit of DePaul Award. Throughout his career, he has been nominated six times for Black Theatre Alliance awards, including one win for *The Blues for an Alabama Sky* at Goodman. Dexter can next be seen in August Wilson's *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* at The Goodman Theatre in the spring of 2024.

**Megan Pahlow [she/her]** (*Costume Designer*) BFA4/ Costume Design. Megan is from Round Lake, Illinois. Her Theatre School design credits include *Goosebumps The Musical*, *Tall Enough*, *Mess Fest Comedy Festival*, and assistant costume design for *Fefu* and *Her Friends*. She is very excited to see what opportunities lie ahead after graduation!

**Aidan McLeod [he/him]** (*Lighting Designer*) BFA3/ Lighting Design. Aidan is from Middleton, Wisconsin. Recent productions include *Do You Feel Anger?* (Asst. Lighting Designer), *Christmas* at DePaul 2022 (Programmer), *Cosi Fan Tutte* (DPOT, Asst. Lighting Designer), and *It Came From Outer Space* (CST, Asst. Projection Designer). Aidan also enjoys working in the electrics shop at The Theatre School, and as a lighting designer at the Holtschneider Performance Center. Shoutout to *The Sopranos* for being the tv show of choice during late nights of prep work for *unaccompanied*. Aidan is joining American Players Theatre this summer as the lighting associate for their 2023 season, and is beyond excited to study lighting design abroad in London for the upcoming fall term. See more at [AidanMcLeodDesign.com](http://AidanMcLeodDesign.com).

**Morgan Dudaryk [she/they]** (*Sound Designer*) BFA3/ Sound Design. Morgan is a sound designer, composer, and video editor from Bolingbrook, Illinois. Theatre School credits include *Vinegar Tom* (Sound Designer/Composer), *The Book of Will* (Sound Designer), *Goosebumps The Musical* (Assoc. Sound Designer), *Much Ado About Nothing* (Sound Technician), *Detroit '67* (Assoc. Sound Designer), and *The Seagull* (Sound Designer). Recently, Morgan was

## BIOGRAPHIES

the assistant sound supervisor for Lookingglass Theater's *The Steadfast Tin Soldier*, and will return to the position for their new musical *Lucy and Charlie's Honeymoon* in the summer. Next school year, Morgan will be returning to the Healy for *The Royale* (Sound Designer).

**Camille Rose Pugliese [she/her]** (*Dramaturg*) BFA3/Dramaturgy & Dramatic Criticism. Camille Rose is a Garden State-grown dramaturg thrilled to be involved in this incredible production. Recent credits include *Toni Stone* at Goodman Theatre (Asst. Dramaturg). Theatre School credits include *Henry IV* and *Much Ado About Nothing* (Dramaturg). Camille also serves as managing editor of *The Grappler*.

**Alivia Arizaga [she/her]** (*Stage Manager*) BFA3/Stage Management. Alivia is from Houston, Texas. Her recent Theatre School credits include *Las Wavys* (Stage Manager), *Top Girls*, and *Detroit '67* (Asst. Stage Manager). She would like to thank her roommate Briana Hryhorysak for always loving and supporting her.

**Marisa Elizabeth [she/her]** (*Asst. Director*) BFA3/Theatre Arts. Marisa is a director, writer, performer, and deviser from West Palm Beach, Florida. This is her first time working on a new work from the directing side, and she's incredibly grateful to Phyllis, Dexter, Helaina, and the entire creative team for this opportunity. Previous Theatre School credits include *Las Wavys* (Alien 1 + Brenda Random), *Detroit '67* (Asst. Director), *Damn, I Miss the Cat* (Stage Manager/Riley), *I Spy: A Family Comedy Show* (Co-Director), and *Suicide, Incorporated* (Stage Manager). Extra special thanks to my Mama, who helped me find my love for theatre in the first place - as always, eternally grateful to you.

**Audrey Terhune [she/her]** (*Asst. Stage Manager*) BFA1/Stage Management. Audrey is from Litchfield, Connecticut. Her Theatre School credits include *Eurydice* (Asst. Stage Manager) and *Vinegar Tom* (Asst. Stage Manager).

**Trenton Jones [he/him]** (*Assoc. Scenic Designer*) Alum. Trent is a scenic designer and painter based in Chicago, but is originally from Houston. He graduated from The Theatre School in 2021 and is thrilled to be back again as a collaborator. Recent scenic design credits: *When All of This is Over* (Glass Apple Theatre), *Last Ascent* (The New Coordinates), *As You Like It*, and *Neighborhood 3: Requisition of Doom* (The Theatre School). He has also painted shows at Writers Theatre, Buffalo Theatre Ensemble, Shattered Globe, and Young People's Theatre of Chicago. TrentonJonesDesign.com

**Eli Wallow** (*Props Artisan*) BFA2/Theatre Technology. Eli had a lot of fun being the props artisan for this show. Having previously been in carpentry related roles for prior shows here at The Theatre School, he found it very engaging to foray into the world of filling out details in the world you see before you. He hopes you enjoy the show!

**Sam Lancaster [he/him]** (*Props Director*) BFA4/Theatre Technology. Sam is from Omaha, Nebraska, and in his final year at DePaul. His Theatre School Credits include *Las Wavys* (Technical Director), *Three Antarticas* (Asst. Props Director) and *Detroit '67* (Asst. Props Director).

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 Max Epps ..... Draper  
 Jessie Govens ..... Wardrobe Supervisor  
 Alex Hagman ..... Draper  
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 Chris Hofmann ..... Director of Production  
 Jim Keith ..... Theatre Assistant Technical Director  
 Jen Leahy ..... Theatre Technical Director  
 Jennifer Lightfoot ..... Wig and Makeup Supervisor  
 Erin Paige-Bhamrah ..... Sound Technologist  
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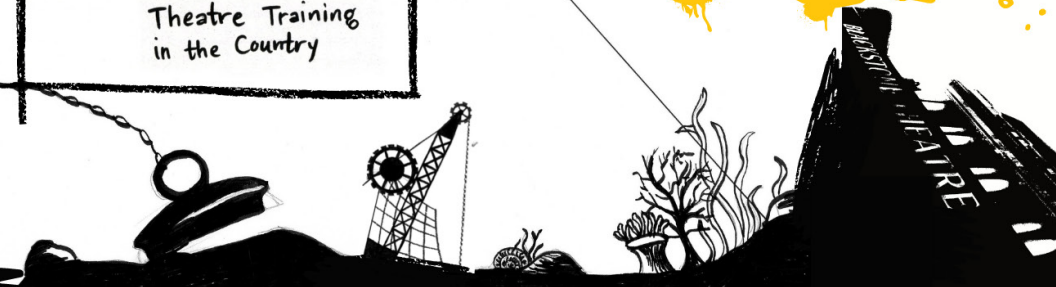


WE



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Vision Statement  
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Theatre Training  
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AT DePaul University