

Exception to the Rule



STUDIO

FRIENDS,



Because theatre seasons operate on a school-year-like calendar, *Exception to the Rule* is in our back-to-school slot. So we take cheeky pleasure that it's set in a classroom.

This production excites me for numerous reasons. It marks the Studio debut of Dave Harris, a playwright that we've long admired. Dave is a writer who takes on the vexed topic of race in America with an off-beat sensibility, a wild theatrical imagination, and a twisted sense of humor. It also marks the Studio debut of director Miranda Haymon, who we've also become fans of in recent years, and who operates with a delightful combination of rigor and joy. And it allows us to showcase this ensemble of fiercely talented young actors, all performing on our stages for the first time.

Equally exciting for me is the play's subject and setting. The play is set in an unnamed city, but it could easily be DC. Years ago, I was myself a DCPS high school teacher in a school that could be this one. Dave has here managed a rare feat: he has depicted this school and its students in a way that rings true to me. Having taught AP Calculus at my school, I also love that Dave focuses on a high-achieving kid in a lousy school. Among his questions: can one escape from environments like this, what does escape cost, and how does the whole notion of escape internalize a kind of racism?

But these high school students aren't consumed with questions like that. Their attention is more directed toward getting the girl or who's wearing what or being invited to the weekend party. That's part of the fun Dave is having—letting the conversation about public education, opportunity, and race play out behind a frenzied foreground. (And play out theatrically—this being Dave Harris, *Exception to the Rule* also offers a healthy dose of theatrical existentialism.)

So welcome back to school, Studio style! We're glad to have you with us as we kick off what promises to be another exhilarating season. The entire staff joins me in welcoming you to share in the excitement.

Yours,

David
David Muse
Artistic Director

For a note from the Dramaturg and more background information on *Exception to the Rule* please visit



<https://www.studiotheatre.org/exception-to-the-rule>

STUDIO THEATRE

DAVID MUSE
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

PRESENTS

**REBECCA ENDE
LICHTENBERG**
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

EXCEPTION TO THE RULE

BY
DAVE HARRIS

DIRECTED BY
MIRANDA HAYMON

Exception to the Rule is presented by special arrangement with Broadway Licensing, LLC, servicing the Dramatists Play Service imprint. (www.dramatists.com)

WORLD PREMIERE produced in New York City by Roundabout Theatre Company as part of Roundabout Underground at the Harold and Miriam Steinberg Center for Theatre in 2022.



The Director and/or Choreographer is a member of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers, Inc., an independent national labor union.



The scenic, costume, lighting and sound designers in LORT Theatres are represented by United Scenic Artists, Local USA829 of the IATSE.

This Theatre operates under an agreement between the League of Resident Theatres and Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States

SET DESIGNER
TONY CISEK

COSTUME DESIGNER
BRANDEE MATHIES

LIGHTING DESIGNER
EMMA DEANE

SOUND DESIGNER
KATHY RUVUNA

INTIMACY COORDINATOR
SIERRA YOUNG

DRAMATURG
ADRIEN-ALICE HANSEL

PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER
JOHN KEITH HALL*

DIRECTOR OF PRODUCTION
JEFFERY MARTIN

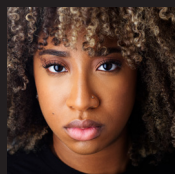
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CASTING
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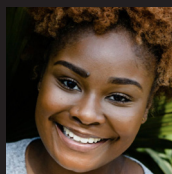
UNDERWRITTEN BY
**AMY WEINBERG AND
NORBERT HORNSTEIN**

SETTING: An inner-city classroom.

CAST



**MIKAYLA
KHALIA
MUHAMMAD***



**DASANI
SHANA LEE HILL**



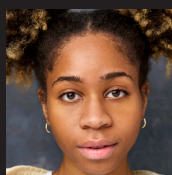
**TOMMY
STEVEN TAYLOR
JR.***



**ABDUL
KHOURI
ST.SURIN***



**DAYRIN
JACQUES
JEAN-MARY**



**ERIKA
SABRINA LYNNE
SAWYER***



**INTERCOM
CRAIG WALLACE***

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**MIKAYLA AND DASANI
AYSIA GLENN**

**ABDUL AND TOMMY
DARIEN WEEMS**

**DAYRIN
ABDOUL LAMINE**

**ERIKA
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PLAYWRIGHT



DAVE HARRIS

is a poet, playwright, and screenwriter from West Philly. Selected plays include *Tambo & Bones* (LA Drama Critics Award “Best New Play”, *TimeOut London* “Best Plays of 2023”), *Exception to the Rule*, and *Everybody Black*. His first feature film, *Summertime*, premiered at the 2020 Sundance Film Festival and was released in 2021. Selected honors include the 2023 Horton Foote Prize, the Ollie Award, The Lorraine Hansberry Award and Mark Twain Award from The Kennedy Center, The

International Commendation for The Bruntwood Prize, the Venturous Fellowship, and a Cave Canem poetry fellowship, amongst others. Dave has written feature and television projects for AMC (*Interview With A Vampire*), Netflix, Amazon (*The Fortress of Solitude*), and FX, amongst others. His first full-length collection of poetry, *Patricide*, was published by Button Poetry.

DIRECTOR



MIRANDA HAYMON (they/she)

is a Princess Grace Award-winning director and writer. Their recent directing credits include *Mondo Tragic* at National Black Theatre, *In the Penal Colony* at Next Door at New York Theatre Workshop, *Really Really Gorgeous* at The Tank, *The Watering Hole* at Signature Theatre (New York), and *Exception to the Rule* at Roundabout Theatre. Their film *Sis* (2023) screened internationally, winning The Emerging Black LGBTQ+ Filmmaker Award at NewFest; it was a part of the

film program at the Whitney Biennial 2024. As a writer, Miranda most recently wrote *Dylan Mulvaney’s Day 365 of Girlhood Live!* at the Rainbow Room. Miranda’s commercial directing includes projects with e.l.f. Cosmetics, Progressive, Gucci, *GARAGE Magazine*, Dunkin’, and Spectrum. Miranda is a Resident Director at Roundabout Theatre Company.

2024-2025

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ABOUT STUDIO

A longstanding Washington cultural institution, Studio Theatre is a national leader in the production of contemporary plays. We are a community of artists and audience members who believe in the power of theatre to stimulate imagination, open minds, build community, and engage with the most important ideas and issues of the day.

Over 47 years and more than 430 productions, Studio has grown from a company that produced in a single rented theatre to one that owns a multi-venue complex stretching half a city block, but we have remained committed to core distinguishing characteristics: deliberately intimate spaces; excellence in acting and design; and seasons that feature many of the most significant playwrights of our time.

Studio is a values-focused organization that brings characteristic thoughtfulness and daring to our efforts, onstage and off. We are committed to inclusion and access, and make a concentrated effort to proactively dismantle barriers that have excluded people from joyful participation in our art form.

Each season, we produce a diverse roster of vital contemporary plays, featuring local, national, and international talent. We also incubate and develop new work, nurture the next generation of arts leaders, and proactively engage with our community through a wide array of initiatives.

In all that we do, Studio endeavors to make an essential contribution to our field and to the vitality of our nation's capital.

KHALIA MUHAMMAD (Mikayla) is an actor, writer, voiceover artist, and content creator originally from Memphis, TN. *Exception to the Rule* is Khalia's Studio Theatre debut. Other theater credits include *The Sensational Sea Mink-ettes* at Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company and *The Bluest Eye* at Theater Alliance. She can also be seen in the feature film *For What It's Worth* on BET+. On social media @khaliamann (Instagram). actorkhaliamuhammad.com.

STEVEN TAYLOR JR. (Tommy) is a New Yorker with a mission to spread love, activism, and compassion through his art. His recent theatre credits include *As You Like It* and *Natasha, Pierre & the Great Comet of 1812* at Carnegie Mellon University; *Godspell* at Pittsburgh CLO; *Rent* at The Connelly Theater; and *Hood* at a New 42 Studios workshop. He is a recent graduate of the Musical Theater BFA program at Carnegie Mellon University. On social media @steventaylorjr (Instagram).

JACQUES JEAN-MARY (Dayrin) is an actor, storyteller, dancer, and creative, born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. His theatre credits include *Death and The King's Horsemen* at the Shakespeare Theatre Company and *10 Seconds* at Imagination Stage. Jacques can also be seen in a commercial for Snipes USA. Jacques is a 2023 graduate of Howard University with a BFA in Acting, including study at the British American Drama Academy in Oxford. During his time at Howard, Jacques performed in the Howard Players' *A Raisin in The Sun*. For his senior showcase in DC, Jacques performed scenes from plays *Passover* and *Follow Me to Nellie's* at Studio Theatre. On social media @jacques_22 (Instagram).

SHANA LEE HILL (Dasani) hails from New Orleans, Louisiana, and holds a BFA in Theater from Dillard University (2022) and an MFA in Performing Arts from the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) (2024). Her theater credits include *The Colored Museum*, *Gem of the Ocean*, and her directorial debut with *Pipeline* at SCAD. Additional credits include *Memphis* and *Dreamgirls* with Rhodes and Rhodes Productions, and *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Skin of Our Teeth* at Dillard University. Shana is making her professional debut with this production of *Exception to the Rule*. Shana has a deep passion for theater

and brings her excitement and enthusiasm to the stage. She extends heartfelt thanks to Studio Theatre for this incredible opportunity.

KHOURI ST.SURIN (Abdul) is an actor, CorePower Yoga sculpt teacher, college student, and Harlemit making his professional debut. Alongside his love for theatre, Khouri has also been seen in multiple TV shows including *The Equalizer* on CBS and *Law & Order: SVU* on NBC, as well as *The Life List* (Netflix), slated to come out later this year. He is currently in his junior year at NYU, pursuing a BFA in drama. On social media @khourist.surin (Instagram).

SABRINA LYNNE SAWYER (Erika) is making her Studio Theatre debut. Select DC-area theatre credits include *The Sensational Sea Mink-ettes* at Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, *The Winter's Tale* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at Folger Theatre, and a reading of *Central Time* at Mosaic Theater Company. Other recent favorites include *Henry IV Pt II* at the Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival, the Boston premiere of *Chicken & Biscuits* at the Front Porch Arts Collective (Elliot Norton Award for Outstanding Play), and a national tour with the Olney Theatre Center-based National Players in *A Raisin in the Sun* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. She received her B.A. in Theatre (Acting) from the University of Southern California. sabrinalynnesawyer.com.

CRAIG WALLACE (Intercom) returns to Studio having previously appeared in *F**king A* and *Three Sisters*. Other credits include *Radio Golf*, *Ink*, and "Master Harold"... and the Boys at Round House Theatre; *Othello*, *Twelfth Night*, and *District Merchants* at Folger Theatre; *Our Town* and *King Lear* at Shakespeare Theatre Company; *Fences*, *Death of a Salesman*, *The Laramie Project*, and *A Christmas Carol* at Ford's Theatre; *All the Way*, *The Great Society*, and *K2* at Arena Stage; *Our Lady of 121st Street* and *Botticelli in the Fire* at Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company; and *Primary Trust* and *Angels in America* at Signature Theatre. He also has appeared at Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey, Actors Theatre of Louisville, and Shakespeare Santa Cruz. He graduated from Howard University with a BFA and Pennsylvania State University with an MFA. He also trained at the Royal National Theatre, London.

PRODUCTION

TONY CISEK (Set Designer) has most recently designed *The Mountaintop* at Alliance Theatre, *Where the Mountain Meets the Sea* at Signature Theatre, *Blue* at New Orleans Opera, *Ink* at Round House Theatre, *The Color Purple* at the Denver Center for the Performing Arts (DCPA) and Signature Theatre, *Thurgood* at People's Light, *Choir Boy* at DCPA and ACT Contemporary Theatre, *Toni Stone* at Milwaukee Repertory Theatre and Alliance Theatre, and the premieres of *Rubicon* at DCPA and *Tempestuous Elements* at Arena Stage. His work has also been seen at Roundabout Theatre Company, Goodman Theatre, Ford's Theatre, South Coast Repertory, Indiana Repertory, Cincinnati Playhouse, Portland Center Stage, and the Kennedy Center, among others. Tony has received four Helen Hayes Awards and numerous other citations for outstanding scenic design, is a member of United Scenic Artists, and holds an MFA in Design from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. www.tonycisek.com

BRANDEE MATHIES (Costume Designer) has been Studio's Costume Shop Manager since 1994. He is a Helen Hayes-nominated costume designer for *Nollywood Dreams* and *The Mountaintop* at Round House Theatre. He has also costume designed *Passover*, *Mother Struck*, *This Is Our Youth*, *The Year of Magical Thinking*, *Stoop Stories*, *The Rimers of Eldritch*, *A Number*, *The Syringa Tree*, and *Comic Briefs: Outstanding Contemporary Comic Writing* for Studio Theatre, and *Moth*, *Contractions*, *A Beautiful View*, *Crestfall*, and *Polaroid Stories* for Studio 2nd Stage. Other DC-area credits include *one in two*; *Birds of North America*; *Satchmo at the Waldorf*; *Hooded, Or Being Black for Dummies*; *Blood Knot*; *Eureka Day*; *Shame 2.0*; *Vicuna & the American Epilogue*; *and Inherit the Windbag at Mosaic Theater*; *Pankr'ac 45 at Atlas Theatre*; and *Poetry for the People*; *This Girl Laughs, This Girl Cries, This Girl Does Nothing*; and *Black Nativity at Theater Alliance*. He also designed costumes for the film *The AD-X2 Controversy*.

EMMA DEANE (Lighting Designer) is an Indigenous lighting designer based out of New York City. Recent credits include

Confederates at Signature Theatre; *9 Kinds of Silence* at The Play Company; *In the Southern Breeze* at Rattlestick Theater; *Dreaming Zezille* at New York Theatre Workshop; *For the People* at The Guthrie Theater; *Jane Eyre, Dial "M" for Murder, and Newtown* at Geva Theatre; *POTUS: Or, Behind Every Great Dumbass Are Seven Women Trying to Keep Him Alive* and *The Chinese Lady* at Everyman Theatre; *2 Pianos 4 Hands* at Northlight Theatre; *Trouble in Mind* at Hartford Stage Company; *Peter Pan and Wendy* at Kansas City Repertory Theatre; *Bakkhai* at Baltimore Center Stage; *On the Far End and Jennifer, Who is Leaving* at Round House Theatre; *Three Sisters* at Two River Theater; and *Manahatta* at Yale Repertory Theatre. She received her MFA from the Yale School of Drama. emmadeane.com.

KATHY RUVUNA (Sound Designer) is a New York-based sound designer and composer who designed *John Proctor is the Villain* at Studio. Other recent credits include *Mary Gets Hers* at The Playwrights Realm; *Bernarda's Daughters* at The New Group; *Amani* at National Black Theatre; *Dark Disabled Stories* and *Self Portraits (Deluxe)* at The Bushwick Starr; *Trouble in Mind* and *The Hot Wing King* at Hartford Stage; *What-A-Christmas!* and *Sweat* at Alley Theatre; *The Lion in Winter*, *Pipeline*, and *Radio Golf* at Everyman Theatre; *The Great Leap, I and You*, and *Read to Me* at Portland Stage; *Circle Jerk* at Fake Friends; and *In the Southern Breeze* and *Ni Mi Madre* at Rattlestick Theater. She holds a BFA from The Conservatory of Theatre Arts at Webster University and an MFA from the Yale School of Drama.

SIERRA YOUNG (Intimacy Coordinator) is a violence and intimacy director working in the DC/Baltimore area. Sierra is the Resident Violence and Intimacy Director for Mosaic Theater Company. She is an active member of the Society of American Fight Directors, Intimacy Directors and Coordinators, and the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society. Recent Studio credits include *The Colored Museum*. Recent DC credits include *JaJa's African Hair Braiding* and *POTUS: or,*

Behind Every Great Dumbass Are Seven Women Trying to Keep Him Alive at Arena Stage; *Little Shop of Horrors* and *Shout Sister Shout!* at Ford's Theatre; *Merrily We Roll Along* and *Sweat* at The Keegan Theatre; *Confederates, one in two*, and *The Till Trilogy* at Mosaic Theater Company; and *King Lear* at Shakespeare Theatre Company. On social media at @syoungfights (Instagram). sierrayoung.org.

ADRIEN-ALICE HANSEL (Dramaturg, she/her) is the Literary Director at Studio, where she has dramaturged the world premieres of *Problems Between Sisters*, *Good Bones*, *John Proctor is the Villain*, *I Hate it Here*, *Queen of Basel*, *Red Speedo*, and *Lungs*, among others, as well as productions of *The Colored Museum*, *Fat Ham*, *Fun Home*, *English*, *Curve of Departure*, *Wig Out!*, and *New Electric Ballroom*, among many others. Prior to joining Studio, she spent eight seasons as a member of and then running the Literary Department at the Actors Theatre of Louisville and its Humana Festival of New American Plays. She is the co-editor of eight anthologies of plays from Actors Theatre and editor of 13 editions of plays through Studio. Adrien-Alice holds an MFA from the Yale School of Drama.

JOHN KEITH HALL (Production Stage Manager) has stage managed many productions at Studio including *The Colored Museum*, *At the Wedding*, *Espejos: Clean*, *Fun Home*, *English*, *Bad Jews*, *Choir Boy*, *Cock*, *Water by the Spoonful*, *Tribes*, *The Habit of Art*, *Torch Song Trilogy*, *4000 Miles*, *In the Red and Brown Water*, *The History Boys*, and *The Road to Mecca*. Other DC area credits include Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, Olney Theatre Center, Signature Theatre, and The Kennedy Center. His regional credits include over 40 productions as Resident Stage Manager at the Barter Theatre as well as Shadowlands Stage, Virginia Musical Theatre, and Contemporary American Theatre Festival.

JILLIAN CIMINI, CSA (Casting) is a casting director for Roundabout Theatre Company and C12 Casting in NY. Select Broadway credits include *Juliet*; *Swept Away*; *Yellow Face*; *The Great Gatsby*; *I Need That*; *Almost*

Famous; *Jagged Little Pill* (tour); *Caroline, or Change*; *The Ferryman*; *Groundhog Day*; *Fun Home*; *Matilda*, *Cabaret*; and *American Idiot*. Select Off Broadway credits at Roundabout include *Jonah*, *The Wanderers*, *Exception to the Rule*, and *...what the end will be*.

ROUNABOUT THEATRE COMPANY

(Originating Theatre) celebrates the power of theatre by spotlighting classics from the past, cultivating new works of the present, and educating minds for the future. A not-for-profit company, Roundabout fulfills that mission by producing familiar and lesser-known plays and musicals; discovering and supporting talented playwrights; reducing the barriers that can inhibit theatregoing; collaborating with a diverse team of artists; and building educational experiences; and archiving over five decades of production history. Founded in 1965, Roundabout presents this work on its five stages and across the country through national tours. Since moving to Broadway more than 25 years ago, Roundabout productions have received 232 Tony nominations, 222 Drama Desk nominations, and 257 Outer Critics Circle nominations. More information about Roundabout's mission, history, and variety of programs can be found by visiting roundabouttheatre.org.

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Studio Theatre offers exceptional spaces for events, such as meetings, receptions, and parties. Now is the perfect time to inquire about one of our spaces.

For more information
visit Studiotheatre.org/rentals
or email events@studiotheatre.org



2
4
+ 2
SEASON

NOVEMBER 13
2024

SUMMER, 1976

BY DAVID AUBURN
DIRECTED BY VIVIENNE BENESCH

JANUARY 8
2025

**DOWN
STATE**

BY BRUCE NORRIS
DIRECTED BY DAVID MUSE

FEBRUARY 26
2025

THE
SCENARIOS

BY MATTHEW CAPODICASA
DIRECTED BY TIFFANY NICHOLE GREENE

APRIL 30
2025

PARADISE **BLUE**

BY DOMINIQUE MORISSEAU
DIRECTED BY RAYMOND O. CALDWELL

JUNE 18
2025

WIPEOUT^T

BY AURORA REAL DE ASUA
DIRECTED BY DANILO GAMBINI

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The Studio Fellows-in-Residence program prepares future artists and administrators for a successful career in the arts through a rigorous, hands-on training experience over the course of a full theatrical season.

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