CASTING SET FOR DOMINIQUE MORISSEAU DRAMA PIPELINE AT STUDIO THEATRE

Pipeline
Written by Dominique Morisseau
Directed by Awoye Timpo
Runs January 15 – February 16, 2020
Press performance: January 19, 2020 at 2pm

“Pipeline confirms Dominque Morisseau’s reputation as a playwright of piercing eloquence.”
—The New York Times

“An ethically ambiguous drama that raises barbed questions about class, race, parental duty, and the state of American education.”
—Variety

Casting is set for Studio Theatre’s production of Pipeline, playwright Dominique Morisseau’s searing drama about the school-to-prison pipeline and a mother desperately trying to keep her son from becoming ensnared in it. The production runs January 15-February 16, 2020 and is directed by Awoye Timpo. Starring are DC theatre favorite Justin Weaks (Studio’s Curve of Departure) as high school student Omari and Andrea Harris Smith making her Studio debut as his mother, public school teacher Nya. In its recent People Issue, Washington City Paper’s called Weaks a “standout,” going on to say: “D.C. theater audiences love Justin Weaks. …Weaks came to D.C. for a job about four years ago, not expecting to stay. But he kept getting cast in shows, and lucky for local theatergoers, he’s still here.”

Studio is also pleased to welcome Ro Boddie (Dun), returning to the Theatre for the fourth time, as well as Monica Rae Summers Gonzalez (Jasmine), Pilar Witherspoon (Laurie), and Bjorn DuPaty (Xavier).

“Dominque Morisseau writes from a place of deep understanding and familiarity, both with the subject matter and people at the center of her plays,” said Studio’s Artistic Director David Muse. “Though it isn’t set in a specific city, it feels close. There is no doubt that our audiences will see DC reflected to some degree in Pipeline, which will make their reactions to it all the more interesting. It’s a play that brings both clear-eyed analysis about the damage systemic racism does and deep recognition of literature’s power to reflect and transform lives.”

For Pipeline, Morisseau draws on her and her mother’s combined six decades of experience as educators. She was also inspired by Michelle Alexander’s The New Jim Crow, an explosive examination of how the
American criminal justice system targets Black men, and heavily biased press coverage following the murder of Michael Brown.

Studio first introduced Morisseau to DC audiences with the 2017 production of Skeleton Crew. When it premiered at Lincoln Center Theater, Pipeline cemented Morisseau as “a playwright of piercing eloquence” (The New York Times).

About Pipeline

Nya is a single mom and dedicated teacher at a high-poverty city school, determined to give her teenaged son Omari opportunities that her students will never have. When an altercation with a teacher at his private school threatens Omari’s future, Nya has to fight a system that’s against him in any environment. A searing, eloquent, and deeply compassionate look at a broken education system, the moments we are pushed to our limits and the ferocity of one parent’s love.

About Dominique Morisseau

Dominique Morisseau is the author of The Detroit Project (A 3-Play Cycle) which includes Skeleton Crew (Atlantic Theater Company), Paradise Blue (Signature Theatre), and Detroit ’67 (Public Theater, Classical Theatre of Harlem, and the National Black Theatre). Additional plays include Pipeline (Lincoln Center Theater), Sunset Baby (LAByrinth Theatre), Blood at the Root (National Black Theatre), and Follow Me to Nellie’s (Premiere Stages). She is also the book writer on the new musical Ain’t Too Proud – The Life and Times of the Temptations (Broadway/Berkeley Repertory Theatre). Dominique is an alumna of The Public Theater Emerging Writer’s Group, Women’s Project Lab, and Lark Playwrights Workshop, and has developed work at Sundance Lab, Williamstown Theatre Festival, and the Eugene O’Neill Playwrights Conference. Her work has been commissioned by Steppenwolf Theatre, Women’s Project, South Coast Repertory, People’s Light and Theatre, and Oregon Shakespeare Festival/Penumbra Theatre. She most recently served as Co-Producer on the Showtime series Shameless. Awards include: the Spirit of Detroit Award, PoNY Fellowship, Sky-Cooper Prize, TEER Trailblazer Award, Steinberg Playwright Award, Audelco Awards, NBFT August Wilson Playwriting Award, Edward M. Kennedy Prize for Drama, Obie Award, Ford Foundation Art of Change Fellowship, and being named one of Variety’s Women of Impact (2017-2018).

About Awoye Timpo

Awoye Timpo’s Off Broadway directing credits include Good Grief (Vineyard Theatre), The Revolving Cycles Truly and Steadily Roll’d (The Playwrights Realm), and The Homecoming Queen (Atlantic Theater Company). Regionally she has directed Everybody Black (Actors Theatre of Louisville) and Paradise Blue (Long Wharf Theatre). Additional credits include Carnaval (National Black Theater); Sister Son/ji (Billie Holiday Theatre); The Vanished (site-specific); Skeleton Crew (Chester Theatre Company); and Ndebele Funeral (59E59, Edinburgh Festival/Summerhall, and South African tour). She is a producer for CLASSIX, a series exploring classic plays by Black playwrights.

ABOUT THE CAST

- Justin Weaks (Omari) returns to Studio Theatre after appearing in Curve of Departure during the 2017-2018 season. He was most recently seen in Fences at Ford’s Theatre. Selected local credits include BLKS, Gloria, and Describe the Night at Woolly Mammoth; Long Way Down at The Kennedy Center; Gem of the Ocean at Round House Theatre; The Christians at Theater J; Word Becomes Flesh and Still Life with Rocket at Theater Alliance; and Charm at Mosaic Theater Company. Additional regional and New York credits include work with Ensemble Studio Theatre, New York Theatre Workshop, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Shakespeare & Company, and Barter Theatre. Justin holds a Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Supporting
Actor and Ensemble (Word Becomes Flesh at Theater Alliance) as well as three additional Helen Hayes nominations. He is a teaching artist in the Washington, DC metro area and a company member of the Woolly Mammoth. He earned a BA in Theatre from Greensboro College.

- **Andrea Harris Smith** (Nya) is making her Studio debut with Pipeline. Local and Regional credits include Theory with Mosaic Theater Company; Small Mouth Sounds at Round House Theatre; Our Town at Olney Theatre Center; A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Pericles, Les Blancs, and Chicago at Oregon Shakespeare Festival; Mules at Magic Theatre, San Francisco; and Blues for an Alabama Sky at TheatreWorks, Palo Alto, CA. International credits include Katrina at Jericho House, London; A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Hamlet, and Love’s Labour’s Lost with The Royal Shakespeare Company at Stratford-upon-Avon and West End; To Kill a Mockingbird at Birmingham Rep/West Yorkshire Playhouse. She also appeared in the film Last Chance Harvey. TV credits include Hamlet (RSC/BBC), Doctor Who (BBC), and Casualty (BBC). Andrea holds an MFA from American Conservatory Theater and trained at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School in the UK.

- **Monica Rae Summers Gonzalez** (Jasmine) makes her Studio Theatre debut with Pipeline. New York credits include The Siblings Play at Cherry Lane Theatre, Ten Days in a Mad-House with Strangemen Theatre Company, Cost/Benefit with F*It Club, and TALLY HO! Navigating the Future at Theater for the New City. Regional credits include Scapino at Gulfshore Playhouse, and Native Gardens at Syracuse Stage, Geva Theatre Center, and Portland Center Stage. Television credits include Orange is the New Black, Bull, and Shades of Blue. Monica was nominated for Best Leading Actress in a Play in the 2019 SALT Awards. She holds a BFA in Acting from the Conservatory of Theater Arts at SUNY Purchase College.

- **Pilar Witherspoon** (Laurie)‘s international credits include Tsiana in The Doctor and the Patient at Theatre Lliure Barcelona and the Rezo Gabriadze Theatre in Tbilisi, Georgia. Broadway credits include The Father with Frank Langella at Manhattan Theatre Club. Off-Broadway credits include Storm Still at The Sheen Center; Fighting Words at Playwrights Horizons/Underwood Theatre; Beautiful Thing at Cherry Lane Theatre; Far and Wide and The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd at Mint Theater Company. Select regional credits include Othello, Macbeth, and Henry V at Shakespeare Theatre Company, Washington, DC; Twelfth Night at Alabama Shakespeare Festival; Other Desert Cities at the Pittsburgh Public Theater; All’s Well That Ends Well at PlayMakers Repertory Company; and Bus Stop at Baltimore Center Stage. Film credits include Lust Life with Bill Irwin, Custody, The Taking of Beslan, Ten Stories Tall, and Warlord. Television credits include Lincoln, Instinct, Sneaky Pete, The Good Wife, Blue Bloods, The Big C, Law & Order, Law & Order SVU, and Third Watch. Pilar is a recipient of the Fox Fellowship from the William & Eva Fox Foundation and is a graduate of The Juilliard School.

- **Ro Boddie** (Dun) is returning to Studio Theatre for the fourth time in Pipeline. Off Broadway credits include Socrates at The Public Theater, Appomattox at 59E59 Theaters, and A Play is a Poem at Atlantic Theater Company (beginning May 2020). Select regional credits include A Play is a Poem at the Mark Taper Forum; Blueprints to Freedom at La Jolla Playhouse; Skeleton Crew at The Old Globe; The Mountaintop at Cleveland Play House; Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom at Baltimore Center Stage; The Whipping Man at Milwaukee Repertory Theater; and Dirt, Three Sisters, and No Sisters at Studio Theatre. Television credits include The Good Wife, Elementary, Person of
About the creative team.

- **Bjorn DuPaty** (Xavier)’s New York credits include *Mlima’s Tale* at The Public Theater, *Two Mile Hollow* with Women’s Project Theater, *Carnival* with the National Black Theater. National Tour credits include *Julius Caesar* and *Comedy of Errors* with The Acting Company. Regional credits include *Mud Row* with People's Light, *Fairfield* at the Cleveland Play House, *Do You Feel Anger* in the Humana Festival at the Actors Theatre of Louisville, *A Raisin in the Sun* at the Crossroads Theatre Company, and *Clybourne Park* at the Pittsburgh Public Theater. His film and television credits include *Demolition, Alpha House, Sleepy Hollow, The Blacklist, Person of Interest, Zero Hour,* and *All My Children.* Bjorn holds an MFA from the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University.

- **Arnulfo Maldonado** (Scenic Design) is making his Studio Theatre debut with *Pipeline.* Off Broadway credits include *Power Strip* and *The Rolling Stone* with Lincoln Center Theater, *Sugar in Our Wounds* (Lucille Lortel Award) with Manhattan Theatre Club, *School Girls... and Charm* with MCC Theater, *A Strange Loop* and *Dance Nation* with Playwrights Horizons, *Usual Girls* with Roundabout Theatre Company, *The Underlying Chris* with Second Stage, and *Fires in the Mirror* with Signature Theatre. Regional design credits include Alley Theatre, Berkeley Rep, Baltimore Center Stage, Dallas Theater Center, Guthrie Theater, the Humana Festival, Long Wharf Theatre, Old Globe, Two River Theater, and the Williamstown Theatre Festival. Tour credits include *The Magnetic Fields: 50 Song Memoir* (BAM Next Wave, International). Arnulfo is a Clubbed Thumb Affiliated Artist, a recipient of a Princess Grace Fabergé Theater Award, and a multiple Henry Hewes Design nominee. He holds an MFA in Set/Costume design from NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts.

- **Sarita Fellows** (Costume Designer) makes her Studio Theatre debut with *Pipeline.* Her selected credits include *A Bright Room Called Day* with The Public Theater; *Native Son* with The Acting Company; *Original Sound* with Cherry Lane Theater; *Hatef**k with the Women’s Project; *Macbeth, The Winter’s Tale,* and *Measure for Measure* with the Classical Theatre; *A Chronicle of the Death of Two Worlds* with New York Theater Workshop; *Fur, MUD, Prospect,* and *Fabuloso!* with Boundless Theater Company; and *Paradise Blue, Forbidden City, Golden Boy,* and *Hoodoo Love* at Juilliard. Her regional credits include *Top Girls* and *Her Portmanteau* at ACT Theatre; *The Royale* at the Arizona Theater Company; *Ain’t Misbehavin’* at the Signature Theatre; *School Girls...* with the Pittsburgh Public Theater; *Haunted Life* at Merrimack Repertory Theatre; *Two Trains Running* at the Weston Playhouse; *Berta* and *A Late Morning with Reagan* at Contemporary American Theater Festival; *Having Our Say* with the Philadelphia Theatre Company. Her Film/TV credits include, *Sight Pictures, Everybody Dies, Afronauts* (by Frances Bodomo, premiere SWSX 2016); and *Dirt* (by Darius Clark Monroe, premiere Sundance 2016). Sarita is a Lecturer at Princeton University and an Associate Professor at NYU @ Playwrights. She holds an MFA from NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts.

- **Jesse Belsky** (Lighting Designer) previously designed *P.Y.G. or The Mis-Edumacation of Dorian Belle, The Remains, The Effect, Three Sisters, No Sisters,* and *Animal* at Studio Theatre. Regional credits include *The Magic Play* at Portland Center Stage, Syracuse Stage, and Actors Theatre of Louisville; *Lydia and Rough Crossing* at Yale Repertory Theatre; and *The Year of Magical Thinking* at PlayMakers Repertory Company. DC designs include *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* at Ford’s Theatre; *J.Q.A. and The Year of Magical Thinking* at Arena Stage; *Oslo,* *Handbagged,* and *Book of Will* at Round House Theatre; *The Mystery of Love & Sex* at Signature Theatre; *Henry IV P1, The Winter’s Tale, Sense & Sensibility,* and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* at Folger Theatre; *Labour of Love, The Invisible Hand,* and *The Magic Play* at Olney Theatre

*Interest,* and *Unforgettable.* Ro is an alumnus of the University of the North Carolina School of the Arts.

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*Note:* The text provided is a natural representation of the content from the given page, focusing on the creative team's credits and background. It is designed to convey the information in a clear and accessible manner, ensuring that the structure and flow of the original content are preserved. The text may contain direct quotes and specific details from the original document.
Fan Zhang (Sound Designer) makes her Studio Theatre debut with Pipeline. Select Off Broadway credits include Paris (Atlantic Theater), Our Dear Dead Drug Lord (Second Stage & WP Theater), Pumpgirl (Irish Repertory Theatre), Suicide Forest (Ma-Yi Theater Company), Molly Sweeney (Theatre Row), Round Table (59E59), Behind the Sheet (Ensemble Studio Theatre), The Trail of the Catonsville Nine (Transport Group), Scissoring (INTAR), Beautiful Day Without You (West End Theatre), Three Girls Never Learnt the Way Home (Cherry Lane Theatre), Tania In the Gateway Van (New Georges), The Mecca’s Tale (The Sheen Center), and Interstate (New York Musical Festival). Regional credits include Yasmina’s Necklace (Premiere Stages), Seven Guitars (Yale Rep), Redeem (Cincinnati Ballet), Revolutionist (Pittsburgh City Theatre), Red Maple (Capital Rep). Training: MFA, Yale School of Drama

Kelly Colburn (Projects Designer) is a DC-based freelance interdisciplinary artist working as a director and projections and multimedia designer. Select design credits include P.Y.G. or The Mis-Education of Dorian Belle, The Hard Problem and If I Forget with Studio Theatre; Small Mouth Sounds with Round House Theatre; The Invisible Boy with Children’s Theatre of Charlotte; The 2019 Shakespeare Theatre Gala with Shakespeare Theatre Company; The Fantasticks with Infinity Theatre Company; Kiss with Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company; Blood at the Root with Theater Alliance; Of Equal Place with Dance Exchange; and The Royale at Olney Theatre Center. Kelly was a 2017-2018 NextLOOK Resident Artist and a recipient of the 2018 Jim Henson Puppetry Grant. She holds a BFA from NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts (2011) and an MFA from the University of Maryland (2018).

Lauren Halvorsen (Dramaturg) is in her ninth season as Studio’s Associate Literary Director. Her dramaturgy credits include Doubt, P.Y.G. or The Mis-Education of Dorian Belle, Admissions, Kings, If I Forget, Vietgone, The Wolves, Skeleton Crew, The Father, Three Sisters, The Hard Problem, Hand to God, Moment, Between Riverside and Crazy, Chimerica, The Wolfe Twins, Belleville, Water by the Spoonful, Tribes, The Real Thing, The Motherfucker with the Hat, The Aliens, Bachelorette, The Big Meal, and Time Stands Still. Previously, Lauren spent three seasons as Literary Manager of The Alley Theatre. She was the Artistic Associate of the WordBRIDGE Playwrights Laboratory for six years and has worked in various artistic capacities for The Kennedy Center, City Theatre Company, Eugene O’Neill Theater Center, First Person Arts Festival, and The Wilma Theater. Lauren is a graduate of Bryn Mawr College.

Marielle Burt (Assistant Director) is a director, choreographer, and playwright. Her recent directing credits include The Wolves, Helens of Troy New York, and Psychopsychotic at Brown University. Marielle has previously worked in the artistic departments of Trinity Repertory Company, the New York International Fringe Festival, and Nightdrive theatre company. She recently graduated from Brown University with a BA in Gender Studies and Literature. Marielle also studied directing at The National Theatre Institute at the Eugene O’Neill Theater Center and devised/avant-garde performance at Bard College Berlin.

Charles Cicchino (Assistant Stage Manager) previously served as the Assistant Stage Manager of Doubt: A Parable at Studio Theatre, as well as the Assistant Stage Manager of The Three Musketeers at RhinoLeap Productions. His stage management credits include The Caucasian Chalk Circle, Us/Them, and Macbeth from his time at Wake Forest University.

INFORMATION
Where: Studio Theatre’s Mead Theatre, 1501 14th St NW, Washington, DC 20005
Performances: Tuesday-Saturday at 8pm, Saturday and Sunday at 2pm, and Sunday at 7pm
There will be no matinee performance on January 18 and no evening performance on January 19.
Tickets: $60 – $90
Runs January 15 – February 16, 2020
Press performance: January 19, 2020 at 2pm
STUDIO THEATRE
Studio Theatre is Washington’s premier venue for contemporary theatre, “where local audiences will find today’s edgiest playwrights” (Variety). One of the most respected midsized theatres in the country, Studio produces exceptional contemporary drama in deliberately intimate spaces. Drawing inspiration from great ensembles—where people work together with a spirit of generosity and professional rigor—Studio brings characteristic thoughtfulness and daring to its work onstage and off, through its new work incubator and engagement, education, and workforce training initiatives. Studio serves nearly 75,000 people each year, including more than 1,000 youth and young adults through community engagement initiatives. Founded in 1978, the quality of Studio’s work has been recognized by sustained community support, as well as 72 Helen Hayes Awards for excellence in professional theatre.

GENERAL INFORMATION
Location: 1501 14th Street NW (northeast corner of 14th and P Streets)
Parking: Studio has a parking partnership with Washington Plaza Hotel at 10 Thomas Circle NW, three blocks south of Studio; patrons who park at the hotel’s parking garage can purchase a $13 voucher at the box office. Street parking is extremely limited; arrive early to increase your options.
Metro Stops: Red Line: Dupont Circle, Orange/Blue Lines: McPherson Square, and Green/Yellow Lines: U Street/Cardozo
Accessibility: Studio’s theatres are all wheelchair accessible; seats are available by reservation. Assistive listening devices are available for all shows at the Box Office. Call the Box Office at 202.332.3300 for more information.

CONTACT INFORMATION
Tickets and Subscriptions: 202.332.3300
Administration: 202.232.7267
Website: studiotheatre.org
E-mail: info@studiotheatre.org

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