

By The Way, Meet Vera Stark

By Lynn Nottage

Directed by: Angelisa Gillyard

Duke University
Department of
Theater Studies
presents

PERFORMANCES

NOVEMBER 14-16 and
21-23, 8 p.m.

NOVEMBER 17
2 p.m.

3

Sheafer Lab
Theater
Bryan University
Center

**By The way,
Meet Vera Stark
By Lynn Nottage**

Directed by: Angelisa Gillyard

**By the Way,
Meet Vera Stark**

Director

Angelisa Gillyard

Scenic Designer

Josafath Reynoso

Costume Designer

Hannah J. Haverkamp

Light Designer

John Alexander

**Sound Designer &
Composer**

David L. Wilson

Projection Designer

Ethan Eldred

Wig & Make Up Design

Angella Fraser

Prop Artisan

Tim Domack

Intimacy Director

Veronica Dress

Stage Manager

Khiyali Pillalamarri*

Asst. Stage Manager

Lilah Gorfain*

CAST

Vera Stark Unglid Paul
Gloria Mitchell..... Ally Doss*
Lottie McBride/Carmen Levy-Green..... Victoria Miringu*
Anna Mae Simpkins/Afua Assata Ejobo Ayanna Owens*
Leroy Barksdale/Herb Forrester Derrick Hamilton*
Fredrick Slasvick/Brad Donovan..... Gus Gress*
Max Von Oster/Peter Rhys-Davies..... Blaze Gambla*

*Students enrolled in Theater Studies Mainstage Production courses
THEATRST 350-1, taught by Angelisa Gillyard, or THEATRST 226S,
taught by Bill Webb

PRODUCTION STAFF

Production Manager	Thom Quintas
Technical Director	Bill Webb
Costume Shop Supervisor	Hannah J. Haverkamp
Scene Shop Supervisor	David Berberian
Props Artisan	Tim Domack
Scenic Artisans	Miyuki Su
	Alex Webb
Costume Assistant	Denise Schumaker
Graphic Designer	Rebekah Miel
Photographer	Les Todd

PRODUCTION RUN CREW

Light Board Operator	Haoxin Feng*
Sound Board Operator	Amy Zhou*
Projections Operator	Amy Huang*
Scenic Run Crew	Junyan Li*
	Seinyi-Abasi Odungide*
	Michael Scherk*
Props Run Crew	Ivy Reinmiller*
Wardrobe	Dasol Lee
	Asha Bashir Lopez

COSTUME SHOP CREW

Rebecca Alara, Fayanne Lin, Jackie Park, Seneca Russell, Sophia Sang, Chloe Schueller, Ilana Segal, Sophia Solomon

SCENE SHOP CREW

Fiona Bolte-Bradhurst, Ryan Khan, Madison Lamptey, Trinity Quaye, Paris Reynosa

The production would like to thank Sarah Cooper and Bellevue House in Hillsborough for the gracious use of their home for filming

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Dreams

By Langston Hughes

*Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.*

*Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.*

We all have dreams for our lives. We dream about what our career, family, health and finances will look like. We dream about places we want to go and things we want to do. Our dreams are inextricably intertwined with our identity and our heritage. However, what happens when you are forced to pursue your dreams via a system that was built to limit the scope of your opportunities because of your heritage? Do you shrink your dreams or do you attempt to play within the system with hopes that it will change in the future?

Lynn Nottage often writes about the human toll of these power systems. In *Sweat*, Lynn writes about a group of factory workers who labor in a capitalistic system

that refuses to see them as people, but merely expenses or liabilities on a balance sheet that must be minimized. In *By the Way, Meet Vera Stark*, she writes about four talented Black women actors in the early 1930's Hollywood film system that perpetuates racial stereotypes and racism. These fictional four women, like real Black artists throughout times past and present, must make difficult choices in order to pursue their dreams. Inspired by the lives of Hattie McDaniel, Butterfly McQueen and Dona Drake, Lynn calls us to examine ourselves, our own choices and our relationship to the system in light of the choices of those who have gone before us. Will we be seen as selling out or courageously working within the system asserted upon us, and who gets to decide?

After seeing the show, I hope you begin to examine not only your choices, but also how you judge the choices of others. Consider others' life circumstances. Exercise empathy and then ask yourself, "What you are willing to surrender for your dream?"

BIOGRAPHIES

John Alexander (Light Designer) Off-Broadway: *Packages O' The Things We Deliver* (National Black Theatre), *Lambs 2 Slaughter* (Cherry Lane Theatre) and *Migration: Reflections on Jacob Lawrence* (New Victory Theater). Other recent designs include: *Two Corners* (Finger Lakes Opera), *Sanctuary Road* (Virginia Opera), *Is God Is* (Constellation Theater), *Confederates* (Mosaic Theatre Company), *Selling Kabul* (Signature Theatre), *From the Mississippi Delta* (Westport Country Playhouse), *Crying on Television* (Everyman Theatre), *Quamino's Map* (Chicago Opera Theatre), *B.R.O.K.E.N. Code B.I.R.D. Switching* (Berkshire Theatre Group), *Sheepdog* and *The House of the Negro Insane* (Contemporary American Theatre Festival). Upcoming designs include: *Waitress* (Red Mountain Theatre) and *Sleepova* (Olney Theatre Center). www.JohnDAlexanderLightingDesign.com

David Berberian (Scene Shop Supervisor) has spent over two decades in the world of theater and film. He is currently serving as the technical director for Duke University Theater Operations. David graduated with a BFA in acting from East Carolina University. He has been seen on stage locally and has been in numerous corporate video projects, including training videos for IBM, Comcast, Cisco, Cree and Glaxo-Smith Kline. David is a recurring role player, working with Credit Suisse during its summer training programs. David also enjoys his work with Theater Delta (TD) — an interactive theater model for social change that boasts such clients as The World Bank and the United States Army. With TD, David has had the privilege of traveling the country and working with a diverse group of clients on a range of social issues.

Tim Domack (Props Artisan) is super happy to be back in the theater again. His New York credits include: The Juilliard School props artisan and assistant for seven years, The Charlotte Wilcox Company and Shakespeare in the Park. Regional credits include: GoodSpeed Opera House, Portland Opera, Utah Festival Opera, North Carolina Theatre, Duke University, William Peace University and PNC. Tim is currently the technical theater teacher at Wake Forest High School. He sends a special thank you and love to his family: Caroline, JJ, Phillip and Margaret.

Ally Doss (Gloria Mitchell) is a junior from New York City double majoring in Computer Science and Theater Studies. She is a chronic theater kid and a die-hard member of Hoof 'n' Horn, Duke's student-run musical theater organization; last semester she worked with H'n'H

on her directorial debut, *Natasha, Pierre, and the Great Comet of 1812*. She has also acted as Maria in *9 to 5*, Chad in *High School Musical on Stage!*, Sheila in *A Chorus Line*, Ronnette in *Little Shop of Horrors* and the Scientist (supporting) in *Sundial* by Sam Carpenter (Duke '24). Through Duke Players, she also acted as June in *Marisol* and Charlie (lead) in *Sugar at 4 in the Morning* by Tess Redman (Duke '24). She is so excited to be involved in her first Theater Studies Mainstage show and is thrilled to be balancing her course schedule of beep-booping with pretending to be white. Enjoy the show and finally seeing Ally as a blonde woman (scary)!

Veronica Dress (Intimacy Director) is thrilled to support this production of *By the Way, Meet Vera Stark*. Founder of The Dress Rehearsal, a sexuality education and intimacy coaching practice, Veronica is passionate about creating consent-forward spaces where everyone can thrive. You can find her directing intimacy throughout the Triangle for companies like Burning Coal Theatre, National Women's Theatre Festival, Raleigh Little Theatre and various university theaters. When she isn't in the rehearsal room, you can find her staring adoringly at her cats, traveling with her community or shimmying on the burlesque stage. Thank you to the cast and team of *By the Way, Meet Vera Stark* for allowing her to join in on this incredible production!

Ethan Eldred (Projection Design), MFA, is a composer and designer of sound and media for the stage. Eldred earned an MFA from the University of California-San Diego and is a Lecturing Fellow in Theater Studies at Duke. Recent professional credits include Associate Sound/Media Design and Tour A/V supervision for La Jolla Playhouse's *Is It Thursday Yet?* (San Diego, CA), Video/Media Supervision for *Tornado Tastes Like Aluminum Sting* at Contemporary American Theatre Festival (Shepherdstown, WV) and Sound and Projections Design for *Singin' in the Rain* at New Village Arts (Carlsbad, CA). More info at BardSound.com.

Angella Fraser (Wig & Make Up Design) As a little Jamaican girl new to Brooklyn, "doing hair" with classmates was the bridge to acceptance. Angella studied mechanical engineering as an undergraduate and computer information systems in graduate school, but this never quieted her interest in the relevance of hair as connection, artistic expression and personal agency. After a 30-year career in tech, she finally validated this passion with cosmetology school to become a Licensed Natural Haircare Specialist. In 2017, she founded HeadSpace

NC/Rhythm Wigs, a beauty and advocacy company. She also hosts The Hair Stories Project, which explores the stories of Black women where hair is central. She has been educating, designing and leading Hair & Wigs teams at NC Theatre, PlayMakers Repertory, Theatre Raleigh, East Carolina University and Duke University. Angella believes “theater is the embodiment of the transformative power of hair, and I’m honored to be right in the thick of it!”

Blaze Gambla (Max Von Oster/Peter Rhys-Davies) is a senior studying Arabic and Theater Studies. Having previously appeared in Scott Frankel’s new work, Ken Cerniglia and Michael Walker’s new work, Tom Zhang’s new work, Duke Theater Studies’ *She Kills Monsters* (Orcus), *Rent* (Mark), and Centennial Celebration, Hoof and Horn’s 24-hour version of *Beauty and the Beast* (Gaston), and Duke Players’ *Heathers* (Ram), it may be that he spends more time in the Bryan Center than in any of his classes. A member of the Duke Players executive committee and physical fitness officer for the Duke/NCCU Air Force ROTC, he’s in zen-like touch with both body and mind. When home, he enjoys cooking with his younger brother, Koa.

Angelisa Gillyard (Director), a Helen Hayes Award-nominated director, choreographer and educator, is thrilled to be making her Duke University debut. Most recently she directed the DC area premiere of *The Bubbly Black Girl Sheds Her Chameleon Skin* and served as associate director for the Broadway and off-Broadway productions of *Days of Wine and Roses*. She directed and choreographed the Helen Hayes-nominated production of *The Hula-Hoopin’ Queen* at Imagination Stage and directed the Helen Hayes-nominated production of *Once on This Island* for Constellation Theatre Company. Angelisa also co-directed the Helen Hayes-nominated *Day of Absence* with Raymond O. Caldwell at Theater Alliance. Her direction and choreography have also been seen at Arena Stage, 1st Stage, Studio Theatre, Signature Theatre, Folger Theatre and several DC-area colleges and universities. Angelisa has an MBA and PhD in business and an MFA in directing. Visit www.angelisa.net to learn more.

Lilah Gorfain (Assistant Stage Manager) is a sophomore from New York City. At Duke, Lilah has previously performed in *Twelfth Night* and *Last Summer at Bluefish Cove*, as well as *Laurel Canyon* with Duke’s New Works Lab this year. When she is not in rehearsal, you’ll probably find Lilah gobbling up Gothic Grill ice cream or writing articles

for Chronicle Sports. She would love to thank the cast, crew, and her friends and family for their love and support!

Gus Gress (Fredrick Slasvick/Brad Donovan) is a Trinity senior from Thousand Oaks, CA majoring in Theater Studies and Public Policy. Favorite Duke credits include Algernon in *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Duke Players), Cinderella's Prince/Wolf in *Into the Woods* (Hoof 'n' Horn) and Roger in *Rent* (Theater Studies/Hoof 'n' Horn). Offstage, Gus co-directed *Me Too Monologues* (2023) and associate produced *Last Summer at Bluefish Cove* (Duke Players). He is currently completing a senior thesis about local government investment in nonprofit theater organizations, focusing on the *Horn in the West* outdoor drama in Boone, NC. Gus thanks his parents for their training, his friends for their never-ending support and the Duke community for attending this show!

Derrick Hamilton (Leroy Barksdale/Herb Forrester) is a sophomore from Memphis, TN, majoring in Theater Studies with a minor in Chemistry. He is on the pre-med track and a member of Speak of the Devil, Duke's "handsomest" all-male a cappella group. Derrick has previously appeared in Hoof 'n' Horn's productions, including playing Audrey II in *Little Shop of Horrors* and LeFou in *Beauty and the Beast*. In *By the Way, Meet Vera Stark*, Derrick is excited to portray the roles of Leroy Barksdale and Herb Forrester. This is his first time performing in a Duke Theater Studies Mainstage production, and he is thrilled to be part of the experience.

Hannah J. Haverkamp (Costume Design) is a Minnesota-born costume designer and freelance illustrator. She holds an MFA in Costume Design from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and has designed for theater, opera and independent film. Recent designs include *Grandfathered In* by Johann Montozzi-Wood, *Eurydice* for Duke Theater Studies and *We Know This By Heart* for local dance troupe Bipeds. She is currently a Lecturing Fellow in costume design and construction at Duke, and her research explores the construction of identity through connections between clothing, music and folklore.

Victoria Miringu (Lottie McBride/Carmen Levy-Green) is a freshman from Olathe, Kansas, eager to pursue a major in Public Policy. She was in *Mamma Mia!* and *Newsies* in high school, and she is beyond thrilled to nurture her love for theater in her first Mainstage play at Duke! On campus, Victoria is a member of the Black Student Alliance's outreach committee. In her free time, she loves reading, singing,

watching movies and spending time with Durhome (her friends at Duke). Victoria is blessed to work with such an amazing cast, and she thanks everyone for making this experience very memorable. She would love to thank her parents, little sister and friends for their continuous love and support!

Ayanna Owens (Anna Mae Simpkins/Afua Assata Ejobo) is a first-year student from Kansas City, Missouri. This is her first show at Duke University. In previous years she played Blanche in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Narrator 2 in the *Brothers Grimm Spectaculathon* and Stephany in the one act play *A Stereotypical Highschool Romance*.

Unglid Paul (Vera Stark) is a Fulbright Scholar (2021-2022) and second year PhD candidate in the Romance Studies department. Her research focus includes Haitian literature and history, the Black diaspora, translation studies and decolonial theory. She is working to become a professor in literature and history but has always made room for theater in her free time. She has acted in various theater productions in her undergraduate career at Union College including *Godspell*, *i put the fear of mexico in 'em* and *Act a Lady*. This is her first Mainstage production at Duke University. Besides theater, she is also a spoken word poet and volunteers as an ESL teacher.

Khiyali Pillalamarri (Stage Manager) is a senior majoring in Theater Studies and Mathematics. Khiyali got a taste of stage management working on *Sugar at Four in the Morning* and has been enjoying learning more! With the Duke Theater Studies department, they've played Naomi in *Laurel Canyon* (workshop), Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*, a fury in *fury* and Clarion in *Life is a Dream*; and assistant directed *Twelfth Night*. They are a co-president of Duke Players, with whom they've directed and associate produced *Last Summer at Bluefish Cove* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and played Medha in *Physical!* (reading) and Lil in *Last Summer at Bluefish Cove* (emergency replacement). She also writes and runs lighting sometimes. With the Department of Theater Studies' kind support, Khiyali attended the 2024 Summer Shakespeare Intensive at Shakespeare & Company. She hopes to pursue theater professionally.

Thom Quintas (Production Manager) is the Director of Theater and specializes in production and stage management. From 2012 to 2020, he was the production manager and head of the stage management program at Indiana University in Bloomington. Prior,

Thom worked in Los Angeles in film and event management for Disney, Universal, Warner Brothers and Panasonic at various trade shows and conventions, including San Diego Comic-Con and CES. Thom is also a member of Actors Equity and IATSE. He earned an MFA from California Institute of the Arts.

Josafath Reynoso (Scenic Designer) is a Mexico-born designer working in the US as a freelance scenographer and graduate professor. He was awarded the Gold Medal for Emerging Scenic Design at the World Stage Design 2017 in Taiwan and the 2024 Opera America Robert Tobin Director-Designer Award, among others. In the US, he has designed for off-Broadway, professional and regional venues, including American Players Theatre, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, ZACH Theatre, Virginia Stage Company, Clarence Brown Theatre, Serenbe Playhouse, Warehouse Theatre, Triad Stage and Lexington Children's Theatre, among others. International credits include new productions in Mexico, Ireland, Argentina, Venezuela, Spain, Israel and the Czech Republic.

Denise Schumaker (Costume Assistant) has designed costumes, props and sets for theater, dance, opera and tours, as well as film and television, for over 35 years. She was honored with an Emmy® nomination in 2010. Recent work includes *Sister Wives Tell All* on TLC, the film *Bloodspawn* (2024), *The Little Mermaid Jr* for STAR (Special Theatre Arts of Raleigh), *Henry V* for Theatre in the Park, *Something Rotten!* for Raleigh Little Theatre, *The Girlfriends' Guide to the White House* for RedBird Theater Company and *A Few Good Men* for The Justice Theatre Project.

Alex Webb (Scenic Artist) is a Triangle-based scenic artist, prop artisan and scenic designer. They went to East Carolina University and have a BFA in Theatre Arts (Design and Production concentration, with focuses in props and scenic painting). They are excited to return to Duke as scenic artist after their work on *Rent*. Other local credits include *Starry Skies* (Center Theater Company), *The SpongeBob Musical* (NCSU) and *Sweet Charity* (East Chapel Hill High School). Alex would like to thank their family, their partner and the rest of the production team for their support. You can find more of their work on their website (axcwebb.wixsite.com/props-n-paints).

Bill Webb (Technical Director) is thrilled to join the Theater Studies faculty at Duke University as a Lecturing Fellow. A native of Alfred, New York, he received his BA in Theater from Alfred University in 1988. He continued training at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, where he earned his MFA in scenic technology in 1994. In 1996, Bill joined the faculty at Elon University in North Carolina where he served as the lighting designer/production manager for the Performing Arts Department. In addition to his lighting design work at Elon, Bill has designed lights throughout the southeastern United States for companies such as Arkansas Repertory Theatre, Mill Mountain Theatre and the University of North Carolina School of the Arts. In addition to his lighting design career, Bill has worked throughout the United States for companies such as Cirque du Soleil, IWEISS and Bungalow Scenic Studios.

David Lamont Wilson (Sound Design) is thrilled to be making his design debut at Duke University, collaborating with one of his favorite directors and working with this extraordinary cast and crew. Wilson's most recent sound design was this season's critically acclaimed production of *Ragtime* at the Hangar Theater and *Covenant* at Theater Alliance. Next up for David is *Fat Ham* for the Virginia Repertory Theatre and *Who Cares?* for Voices Festival Productions. Favorite sound designs include the off-Broadway production of *Queens Girl in the World* for Abingdon Theatre Company, Alliance Theatre's production of *The C.A. Lyons Project* (Suzi Bass Award nominated), *Wig Out!* at Studio Theatre, Charter Theatre's production of *Am I Black Enough Yet?* and *Titus* for the Washington Shakespeare Theatre. His resume also includes designs at the Kennedy Center, Signature Theatre, Arena Stage, Imagination Stage and the National Conservatory of Dramatic Arts.

GET INVOLVED IN THEATER AT DUKE

Each semester, the Department of Theater Studies presents a Mainstage production directed by a faculty member, designed by professional theater artists and built by Theater Operations staff and students. Auditions are open to all students, who can get academic credit for participating as cast or crew in two classes centered on the Mainstage experience. Many of our classes are open to students at any level of experience, and most of our performance classes — such as Musical Theater Workshop — also present their work publicly at the end of the semester.

We encourage and support student theater on campus in many ways. The department's student branch, Duke Players, produces student-directed events each semester, including staged readings and full productions of original student scripts, contemporary and classic plays and musicals. Its executive board is always open to suggestions for new projects. Contact Secretary Lilah Gorfain at lilah.gorfain@duke.edu.

Theater Studies supports Duke's other student theater groups, such as Hoof 'n' Horn, Duke Chinese Theater, Me Too Monologues and Duke Asian American Theater, by providing rehearsal space, access to our costume and prop collections, promotion and financial support.

If you have questions, email the Director of Theater for the department, Thom Quintas, at thomas.quintas@duke.edu.

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Productions and other events are announced through our list-serve: theaterstudies@duke.edu. To subscribe, send an email message to sympa@duke.edu with the subject line "subscribe theaterstudies." Questions can be sent to theater@duke.edu.

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Marcy Edenfield, Senior Director, *Venue and Production Management*

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Angela Joines, Director, *University Box Office*

Leah Austin, Associate Director, *Production*

Aaron Yontz, Associate Director, *Production*

River Hedgepeth, Assistant Director, *Arts Annex*

Holly Bobo, Assistant Manager, *University Box Office*

David Berberian, Manager, *Scene Shop*

Austin Powers, Senior Production Technician

Christopher Scully-Thurston, Senior Production Technician

Haze Grissett, Senior Production Technician

Scott Silver, Senior Production Technician

Trey Ledford, Senior Production Technician

Paul Chapman, Senior Production Technician

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