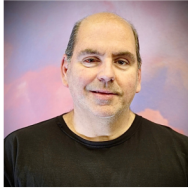


CAST



**Shenoa
Alcantara**



**Anthony
Ariano**



**Alana
Cornish**



**Lou
Kirkland**



**Jovoni
Lewis**



**Zari
McCullers**



**Keya
Perry**



**Steve
Ross**



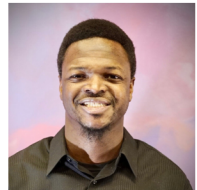
**Josh Ari
Selvey**



**Shamia
Terry**



**Adrienne
Thoman**



**Kevin
Williams**



**Sharon H.
Williams**



**Roe
Braddy**



**Maria James-
Thiaw**



WHO'S WHO in the CAST

Shenoa Alcantara (Chorus 3) was last seen on stage at Open Stage with Puffs. She is excited to share her Dominican culture through the poems of HairStory: Reclaiming Our Crown. Shenoa has enjoyed the process of strengthening her acting abilities in the work of bringing to life this choreopoem.

Anthony Ariano (Ivory Man) is thrilled to have the opportunity to perform, as both an adversary and as an ally, in HairStory: Reclaiming Our Crown. In the past, Anthony has performed for multiple local theatre companies (Little Theatre of Mechanicsburg, Open Stage, Theatre Harrisburg, and the, Hershey Area Playhouse). However, this is his first time performing on the Gamut stage.

Thank you to the wonderful cast and production team, and a special thank you to his wife, Ann, and children, Peter, and Nicoletta for their continued support.

Alana Cornish (Aleyah) is the president of Cornish & Associates and a marketing director for Urban One, the largest Black-owned media company in the country. Alana also curates experiential projects, including the NEON Vintage & Thrifts pop-up shop inside the Urban Snob location. She dedicates her performance to her late mother, Vera Cornish, whose endearing words "Dare to Dream!" always inspired Alana. Alana's fondest theatrical memories include attending HACC's theater program, her supporting role in Harrisburg's showing of Dreamgirls, being an assistant wardrobe stylist for Sankofa Theatre's Black Nativity, and her many childhood performances.

Lou Kirkland (Amber Woman) has been steadily employed in customer service, which enables their interest in photography and poetry. As a member of The Garden Collective, an LGBTQ+ arts group, they specialize in portrait photography for Black and brown people. Lou has several acting credits from high school and college theatre, and HairStory marks their return to the stage after 12 years. Lou says, "It means everything to be in a show written and directed by Black women, featuring beautiful Black people, telling Black stories, because we matter. And no, it's not 'just hair'."

WHO'S WHO in the CAST

(continued)

Jovoni Lewis (Ebony Woman 5) is a graduate of the University of California-Irvine with a master's degree in Theatre-Acting and a bachelor of arts in Theatre-Acting from Temple University. She has appeared in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Polaroid Stories*, *Orpheus Descending*, *Our Town*, *The Vagina Monologues*, and *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide/When the Rainbow is Enuf*. She is excited to be a part of *HairStory*, where she has discovered the beauty and true value of embracing her crown as a Black woman, and the importance of learning her true identity as the Queen that GOD made her!

Zari McCullers (Ebony Woman 3) is originally from Frederick, MD, is a full-time student earning her PhD in Biomedical Sciences at Penn State College of Medicine. Zari is a formally-trained musician, having minored in Music Performance with a focus in Percussion. Zari is also a harpist and plays with the Harrisburg Harp Orchestra. This is Zari's theatrical debut, and she couldn't be more thrilled. With many "hair stories" of her own, Zari resonates with *HairStory's* depiction of African American youth and young adults deciphering the cultural and societal significance of hair.

Keya Perry (Ebony Woman 1) is making a return to the theater, in *HairStory: Reclaiming Our Crown*. A love, that was introduced to her as a little girl through her mother's stage performances. She has directed and written for the stage. Keya is encouraged this choreopoem will shed enlightenment on the history, pride, and cost of Black hair. She is grateful to her friends and family for their love and encouragement and would like to thank the cast and production crew for making this a memorable experience.

Steve Ross (Ebony Man) comes to you fresh from Open Stage theatre where he performed in *Sankofa African American Theatre's Crowns*. Other credits include *Jitney* (Open Stage), *Behold the Lamb*, *Ruth*, and *Miracle of Christmas* (Sight and Sound),



WHO'S WHO in the CAST

(continued)

Law & Disorder and The Sopranos (TV & film). Growing up with four sisters, Steve is all too familiar with the hair story...in the kitchen, with the heinous hot comb. Steve says: "In the pursuit of exterior beauty, I am so proud to say that my sisters along with many others have found the beauty within."

Josh Ari Selvey (Amber Man) also known as Ari De Leo, is an international recording artist and singer/songwriter. Josh says: "This is my first theater performance in over 10 years. My last performance was through the Capital Area School for the Arts in 2010. Being a part of the cast of HairStory has been unlike any other production. I enjoy working with the cast, directors, and managers; It's great to do good work for my community."

Shamia Terry (Ebony Woman 4) is a lover of poetry who works in the nursing field. With a healthy and happy teenage daughter, she is taking her first steps in pursuing her life-long dream of acting. She grew up in hair salons, and says, "I'm not a beautician, but don't push me!" Shamia loves how this choreopoem shines a light on women of ALL hair textures and their underlying traumas. She was always considered the girl with the "good hair," yet she never understood why her hair and her feelings were "STILL so hard to manage."

Adrienne Thoman (Ivory Woman) is the Associate Vice President of Student Engagement at Central Penn College (CPC) and co-creator of The Pirate Life Podcast. She is a graduate of HACC and Shippensburg University and currently completing her doctorate in Higher Education Leadership at Wilmington University. Her favorite past performances include Reclaiming My Time and The Hand that Holds the Quill (original shows performed at CPC's Capital Blue Cross Theatre). Adrienne is thrilled to be in her second show written by Maria James-Thiaw – and is honored to play a role in bringing these powerful hair stories to life on stage.

WHO'S WHO in the CAST

(continued)

Kevin Williams (Chorus 3) was born and raised in Harrisburg, PA. He has been performing stand-up comedy for five years. 2019 Kevin performed at the Rodney Dangerfield comedy club in New York City. He's a member of the comedy sketch team, Hyenasskits/99charactersent. 2018 Kevin helped to create a streaming service app channel, TRI-99TV, a platform for independent creators. Recently, he appeared in the event Grown 'n Hilarious at Gamut Theater. Kevin is energetic, dedicated and driven to put the work in play to make this entertainment business a success.

Sharon H. Williams (Chorus 1) is an English Language Development Specialist in the Harrisburg area. She received her Bachelor of Science from Virginia Tech and her teaching degree from Wilson College. She enjoys the performing arts as she and her husband, Glenn, have started attending performances at the Ware Theatre in Lancaster, PA. She decided to challenge herself with a new experience, thus this is her debut performance. Sharon says, "Hairstory: Reclaiming Our Crown has evoked so many emotions and memories. One is a scene about 'hair day' and how close it brought us together."



HAIR DESIGNS + INC

2448 Walnut Street
Harrisburg, PA 17103

(717) 956-5451



Guiding you through your haircare journey



WHO'S WHO on the Creative Team

Hannah Avcin-Roda (Stage Manager) is a long-time fan and friend of the Harrisburg theater scene. She has worked in theater since she was 16; managing and assisting with many different shows. Those shows include Shakespeare plays, classical pieces, new plays, and all 12 Young Acting Company productions at Gamut Theatre. As always, she is blown away by the talent of the cast and crew. Hair is always an important part of a character; it defines a lot about them. This show opens-up the background about why that is.

Anthony Ariano (Ivory Man) is thrilled to have the opportunity to perform, as both an adversary and as an ally, in *HairStory: Reclaiming Our Crown*. In the past, Anthony has performed for multiple local theatre companies, (Little Theatre of Mechanicsburg, Open Stage, Theatre Harrisburg, Hershey Area Playhouse). However, this is his first time performing on the Gamut stage. Thank you to the wonderful cast and production team, and a special thank you to his wife, Ann, and children, Peter, and Nicoletta for their continued support.

Janet Bixler (Production Manager) is the Executive Director of Programming for Reclaim Artist Collective. In 2018, she and James-Thiaw developed and directed *Herstory: Reclaiming My Time*. During her six years as Theatre Director of Central Penn College's Capital Blue Cross Theatre, she facilitated, directed, and produced over 25 productions. As a theatre practitioner of 25+ years, her love is devised theatre: bringing the lived experiences of the participants to life in an original production. It has been a gift to learn from the actors of *HairStory: Reclaiming Our Crown* and work with a phenomenal creative team.

WHO'S WHO on the Creative Team

(continued)

Roe Braddy (Director) is an educator for Harrisburg Christian School, the author of eight books, and the playwright and producer of three stage productions that were performed locally in Harrisburg. Roe spent most of her free time while in high school and college doing theatre. Roe performed in *A Raisin in the Sun* as Beneatha Younger. Her true love for the theatre is behind the stage. Roe is a board member of Reclaim Artist Collective. When playwright Maria James-Thiaw asked her to direct this piece she jumped at the opportunity.

Lark Daniel (Ancestral Dancer) was introduced to African dance 29 yrs. ago by Rafiyqa Muhammad, through her love of African dance and commitment to preserving African culture, Dwennimmen African Dance Community was born. Currently Lark is the artistic director for Dwennimmen. She teaches weekly African dance classes through Healthy Harrisburg and for the students at The Wordship Academy, and she performs at various community events as well as local universities. Natural hair connects me to my identity which is why I decided to be a part of HairStory: Reclaiming Our Crown.

Andrea Fulton (Wig, Costume, Prop Designer, and Manager) owner of Hair Designs + Inc. and for the past 30 years, Andrea has been Creative Director & CEO of ABW Productions featuring Modeling Workshops, Fashion Designing, Costuming & Prop Creations. Andrea created designs for Kwanzaa Festivals, Black History Showcases, the movie *The Patient* and the play *They Live in You*. HairStory: Reclaiming Our Crown speaks with passion to the hair journeys of women of color, hair texture & colorism. Andrea mirrors the importance of uplifting & educating every person who thinks negatively about their God-Given Hair Curl Patterns.



WHO'S WHO on the Creative Team

(continued)

Jesse E. Goranson (Sound and Projection Designer) works as a production assistant at the Kulkarni Theatre, where he's currently serving as assistant tech director for their spring musical, Cabaret. He's been working with the Kulkarni theatre since it opened in 2016, usually helping design projections and set construction. Jesse is glad to be a part of HairStory: Reclaiming Our Crown. Seeing the stories and lived experiences of people come to life on stage, in such a stylized and inspiring manner is truly something to be proud of. He's honored to be able to work alongside such passionate & friendly people!

Maria James-Thiaw (Playwright-Poet/Ancestral Singer) is a performance poet, playwright, and educator. She has been writing poetry and stories since childhood and published her first chapbook at the age of 19. She has written 4 books and continues to produce choreopoems with the help of her organization, Reclaim Artist Collective (RAC). RAC was founded in 2018 after the successful run of her choreopoem, Reclaiming My Time: An American Griot Project. Maria sees her poetry as one sword in the fight to dismantle systematic racism.

Alexandra Nornhold (Lighting Designer) is a stage manager and lighting designer based in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. She has worked with the Gamut Theatre Group since 2016 and can often be found at the Pullo Center at Penn State Harrisburg. Recent lighting credits include: Thistle and Salt: The Ireland of J.M. Synge, Echoes of Voices of the Eighth, The Princess and the Pea, Voices of the Eighth, Pretty Fire, and Chekhov's Comedies.

Bruce Payne (African Drummer) African drum performer, instructor and African djimbey artist. He has played both trap set and hand drums with orchestras, drum and dance ensembles. Recently he took part in the 2022 Harrisburg Harp Orchestra Christmas Concert.

WHO'S WHO on the Creative Team

(continued)

Yvonne Sadowy (African Drummer) has been playing African drums for 13 years. Her focus is on drumming to heal mind, body and soul while giving back to the community through music. She has shared drumming with women's shelters, rehabilitation centers, daycares, city programs and more. She teaches beginner drumming and drumming for relaxation. As the Director of Unity Drummers, she shared joy, inclusion, and healing through music. Prior to Unity, she directed Nayo African Drum Collective. Yvonne wants folks to know, "be careful of the limits you place on yourself. Nothing should hold you back."

Adama Saho (African Drummer) hails from The Gambia. Adam(a) is a talented musician who has drummed most of his life. He's been a member of Unity Drummers for several years, sharing rhythms from his motherland. He has an easy-going way about him with a strong drummer's spirit.



**NATHANIEL GADSDEN'S
WRITER'S WORDSHOP**

**FRIDAYS
7PM-9PM**

**f Follow us on
facebook**

@THE VOICE 17104
HARRISBURG, PA

You can be our next
featured poet!

For more information
call 717-608-2313
or email
pgadsden@aol.com

ALL PARTICIPATING
POETS AND AUTHORS
CAN HAVE OUR ZOOM
INFORMATION BY
REQUEST ONLY!