



508 Main St., Laurel MD 20707

301-617-9906



Conceived, Written, and Originally Performed by

ANNA DEAVERE SMITH

Original New York Production by

New York Shakespeare Festival

**Friday and Saturday—February 7, 8, 14, 15, 21, 22 at 8
pm**

Sunday afternoons—February 9, 16, 23 at 2 pm

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

“The more things change, the more they remain the same.” I don’t know who originally said that, but I think it applies to this play, and to the political and societal circumstances we now find ourselves in.

Fires in the Mirror was conceived by Anna Deavere Smith after the 1991 “race riots” in Crown Heights, Brooklyn. I’m not sure the term “race riots” is entirely appropriate – because it seems to imply that race alone was the cause of the eruptions that consumed this neighborhood as the result of an automobile accident involving a Jewish man, and a young Black boy.

That an accident was the precipitating event, no one disagrees. It is the perceptions of what transpired after the accident, and the perceived privileges that may have led to the accident, that are more telling. Fires in the Mirror explores some of these perceptions.

As a Native New Yorker, I remember these events very well. I worked in Brooklyn at the time, in East Flatbush, the neighborhood right next to Crown Heights. In fact not only was I working in Brooklyn, but I worked in the medical center that was involved in the treatment of the accident victims and the Jewish man, Yankel Rosenbaum, who was attacked during the riots. In fact I worked for one of the people who was ultimately held responsible for Yankel Rosenbaum’s unnecessary death. I witnessed many discussions and debates among my co-workers, and I was even pursued by various newspaper and TV reporters for an interview (which I declined). So this play is personal to me in several ways.

Anna Deavere Smith interviewed many people who were connected to the events - witnesses, politicians, community activists, religious leaders, and residents of Crown Heights. Their opinions and perceptions are often diametrically opposed. She asks us to consider, why? Where do we get our attitudes? How do we know who we are, and what we “should” think? What role does identity play in our daily lives?

These are the actual, verbatim responses from actual people, many of whom you may recognize. I have tried to portray each character in as authentic a way as possible, without making them into caricatures or mere imitations. I hope this play will make you think – and to ask the question, “why do I feel this way?”

FIRES IN THE MIRROR: Crown Heights, Brooklyn, and Other Identities

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Produced by Maureen Rogers

Directed by Lorraine Brooks

CAST (in alphabetical order)

Nessa Amherst – Anonymous Girl; Monique “Big Mo” Matthews

Paul Brewster – Michael S Miller; Rabbi Shea Hecht

Ashira Cothron – Rivkah Siegal

Janie Macklin – Roslyn Malamud

Margaret McCabe Janicki – Aaron Bernstein; Reuven Ostrow

Marge McGugan – Lettie Cottin Pogrebin

Ross Merlin – Norman Rosenbaum

Matthew Murray – Minister Conrad Mohammad; Henry Rice;
Richard Green

Segun Olorunyomi – Anonymous Young Man #1

Nadia Palacios – Carmel Cato; Anonymous Young Man #2

Tricia Pizarra – Anonymous Lubavitcher Woman

Melvin Smith – Sonny Carson; Rev Al Sharpton

Derek Sollosi– Robert Sherman; Rabbi Joseph Spielman

Chevell Thomas – Rev Heron Sam; George C Wolfe

Jacqueline Youm – Angela Davis; Ntozake Shange

CREW

Director – Lorraine Brooks

Assistant Director – Jacqueline Youm

Stage Manager – Jana King

Lights and Sound – Patrick Pase

Photography – John Cholod

Additional Photography – Beth Mills

Program – Marge McGugan

Choreography – Summer Moore

Sound Design – Lorraine Brooks

Lighting Design – Lorraine Brooks

Hair, Makeup and Costumes – The Cast

Props – Jana King

Character Consultants – Janie Macklin, Tricia Pisarra



Meet the cast and crew

In alphabetical order



Nessa Amherst (Anonymous Girl/Monique “Big Mo” Matthews) is honored to be part of *Fires in the Mirror* with Laurel Mill Playhouse! Some of her favorite credits include *The Survival* (National Queer Theater & Lincoln Center), *#ENOUGH: Plays to End Gun Violence* (1st Stage), *Fiveplay* (Greenbelt Arts Center), *Julia Caesar* (Barefoot Shakespeare Company), *Runtime Error* (Transformation Theatre), and *That Woman - The Monologue Show* (Tennessee Playwrights Studio). Her original monologue, Define “Black,” has been published in the anthology, 08:46: Fresh Perspectives, which is now available to order on Amazon. Special thanks to her family, friends, amazing cast & crew, and God for being with her on this crazy journey called acting! IG: @nessaamherst; website: www.nessaamherst.com



Paul Brewster (Rabbi Shea Hecht/Michael Miller) is pleased to be working in his first production at Laurel Mill Playhouse. He’s been on a run of fun Shakespearean roles: Wall and Moon in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at Silver Spring Stage, Baptista in *The Taming of the Shrew with Fat and Greasy Citizens Brigade* (nominated DC-BWW Best Actor: Community Theater), and Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet* for NOVA Nightsky Theater. As always, he thanks his wife, Linda Vitella, for supporting his time-intensive passion.



Lorraine Brooks (Director) Happy to be celebrating Black History Month, Lorraine is pleased to be directing for the fourth time at Laurel Mill Playhouse, where she got her start directing *Consecrated Ground* in 2023. As an actress she has appeared in several productions at Laurel Mill Playhouse, Upstage Artists, and Vagabond Players in Baltimore. In addition to her interest in theater, Lorraine has a background in art, as she attended the prestigious High School of Art and Design in New York City where she majored in animation and graphic arts. Her artworks are included in private collections in the US, UK, the Netherlands, the Caribbean, and Canada. She would like to thank Maureen Rogers and Laurel Mill Playhouse for taking a chance on her, and her family and friends for their unconditional support and encouragement.



Ashira Cothron (Rivkah Siegal) is debuting at Laurel Mill Playhouse. This is my first show with Laurel Mill Playhouse and my first show in two years! I have always been an active member of theatre communities and I am excited to get to be a part of this important show. This is my first role that is not in a show aimed at children and I am excited to get to stretch my dramatic muscles as it were.



Jana King (Stage Manager) is a retired Visual Arts teacher, having taught in DC Public Schools and PG County Public Schools for over 40 years. She has stage managed several plays at Laurel Mill Playhouse and is very happy to be returning to LMP for *Fires in the Mirror*.



Janie Macklin (Rosalyn Malamud) grew up in Chevy Chase, Maryland and graduated from Charles E. Smith Jewish Days School where she cultivated her love for theatre and acting. She attended the University of Texas at Austin and received a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre and Dance. She's studied across the country from Los Angeles to New York and is excited to be back in the DMV theatre community and performing for the first time with Laurel Mill Playhouse!



Margaret McCabe Janicki (Reuven Ostrow/ Aaron M Bernstein) is delighted to make her debut with LMP. Margaret has appeared in several short films, industrials and theatrical productions in the DC/Baltimore area. Favorite recent theatrical roles include Amelia Earhart (*One Voice*, AmaZing Theatre), Conrade (*Much Ado About Nothing*, Upstage Artists) and Rebecca Nurse (*The Crucible*, Dominion Stage). Margaret is grateful to her family and friends for their ongoing support.



Marge McGugan (Lettie Cottin Pogrebin) is thrilled to be back onstage as this influential pioneer of women's rights. Marge can also be found performing onstage, with her Sweet Adelines chorus, Chesapeake Harmony Chorus. She was recently found costuming *A Murder is Announced* and *Pride and Prejudice* at Laurel Mill Playhouse, *Escape from Margaritaville* for Annapolis Summer Garden Theater and *The Shadow Hour* at Bowie Community Theater. She wants to thank her family and friends for their love, support, and faith in her abilities. And thanks, Dave...those in the know will understand.



Ross Merlin (Norman Rosenbaum) is playing the role of Norman Rosenbaum. "Fires in the Mirror" will be Ross' first time acting on stage! Ross has been an educator in Boston, Atlanta, and now Maryland. He has taken classes at TheatreLab in Washington D.C. and performed with Washington Improv Theatre. He is looking forward to this new challenge and excited to be on the stage with the rest of this great production!



Matthew J. Murray (Minister Conrad Mohammed/Henry Rice/Richard Green) flourishes on the quest of excellence in his craft as an actor. Having participated in numerous acting productions, he continually pushes his boundaries, pursuing growth with each undertaking. He debuted in *Bounce! A Peter Rabbit Remix* at Prince George's Community College. He moved to New Hampshire performing as part of TIGER Children's Touring Group. As well as other acting opportunities. Matthew is thankful for his friends and family that have supported him as he follows his dream.



Shay Olorunyomi (Anonymous Young Man #1) is pleased to make his debut at Laurel Mill Playhouse in *Fires in the Mirror*. Born in Silver Spring, MD now currently living in Laurel, MD. He has done 2 productions in Levine Music in *Mary Poppins*, and at *Bright Star*. He looks forward to working in other theaters in the DMV. Professionally, he works as an audio production/sound guy who can set up, operate & check sound system for live performance and sound recording. He is proud to be in this production.



Nadia Palacios (Carmel Cato/Anonymous Man #2) is a Gaithersburg native and is excited for her role for *Fires in the Mirrors*. She has acted in several productions throughout Maryland and DC since 2022, including as Ana Sofia in *The Palacios Sisters* (GALA Hispanic Theatre), Keegan Dean in *FIVEPLAY* (Greenbelt Arts Center), and Romaine Heilger in *Witness for the Prosecution* (Bowie Community Theatre). She also has several film credits and has participated in acting festivals/competitions. You can see her next performances at the Creative Cauldron and with Maryland Ensemble Theatre this year. Nadia would like to thank her acting coach, Professor Vera Katz, for helping her with developing technique.



Trish Pizarra (Anonymous Lubavitcher Woman) is happy to be back with LMP in *Fires in the Mirror*. As Jewish American she finds continued relevance in the play with what is going on today in our society. Favorite past roles include Old Clown in *A Christmas Carol* with LMP, Trish in *Schoolhouse Rock Live* with SSTG, Officer O'Hara in *Arsenic and Old Lace* with SSTG, Tigger in *A Winnie the Pooh Christmas Tail* with SSTG, Tweedle Dee in *Alice in Wonderland* with SSTG, Mr. Owl in *Winnie the Pooh Kids with Kat* 2nd Stage; Boffo the Clown in *Help Desk* with The Alpha-NYC Theatre Company, The Mime in *The Arkansasaw Bear* with the Montgomery Playhouse; and Trish in *Godspell the Musical* with SSTG. She wants to thank her husband Tony for all his support on all her theatre endeavors.



Melvin Smith (Rev. Al Sharpton/Sonny Carson) is a North Carolina native who currently resides in Prince George's County, MD. He has performed at several theaters across the DMV area, including Silver Spring Stage, Dominion Stage, Laurel Mill Playhouse, Gaithersburg Arts Barn and Thunderous Productions. He has also performed with Upstage Artists Theater in Beltsville, MD, where he currently sits on their Board of Directors. He studied acting at The Theatre Lab School of Dramatic Arts in Washington, D.C. IG @mr.melvindsmith



Derek Sollosi (Robert Sherman/Rabbi Joseph Spielman) is excited for his second show at the Laurel Mill Playhouse. He started acting in his teens and continued throughout college at St. Francis University, earning his acceptance in the National Theatre Honor Society, Alpha Psi Omega. Derek has performed in several productions including *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *Hunchback of Notre Dame*, *Salem Witch Trials*, *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*, William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, *Grease*, *Miss Evers' Boys* and many others. He was also casted for the Equalogy Inc troupe performing interactive shows addressing date rape/violence at colleges and universities all along the east coast. In addition to performing on stage, Derek has been a Video Producer for over 25 years and is currently a contractor at NIH. Derek's proudest ongoing role has been the character of "Dad" to his two beautiful and amazing daughters, Veronika and Rozi. He would like to thank the memory of Kenny Resinski for teaching him every step and emotion he's learned on stage and is forever grateful for the support of his family and friends from his hometown of Levittown, PA, just outside of Philly. Go Birds and Pax et Bonum.



Chevell Thomas (George C Wolfe/Rev. Heron Sam) started acting at an early age with standout performances in preschool and elementary school. He continued through high school and had formal training at the Maryland Center for the Arts. He went on to perform in several regional theater productions while in college, most notably, *The Jero Plays*, *Mari Evans' Eyes*, and *The Amen Corner* at Theatre Cornell in Ithaca, NY. After college he took his acting skills into the classroom incorporating them into his middle and high school math and science pedagogy. He currently works in the health care industry and often “performs” as a corporate trainer. Credits include: Ali Hakim, *Oklahoma!* (ERHS), Walter Lee Younger, *A Raisin in the Sun* (Theatre Cornell), Chume, *The Jero Plays* (Theatre Cornell), Son, *Man on a Mountain* (Encore Dinner Theatre), Josiah Henson, *Josiah Henson: No Uncle Tom* (AmaZing Theatre), Clifford Jarvis, *For God and Country* (AmaZing Theatre), Hodman Bryan, *Miss Evers' Boys* (Laurel Mill Playhouse), and Everett Baker, *Crazy for You* (Laurel Mill Playhouse). Now, he continues his journey as George C. Wolfe and Rev Heron Sam in *Fires in the Mirror*.



Jacqueline Youm (Angela Davis | Leonard Jeffries | Ntozake Shange) feels blessed to participate in such meaningful storytelling at Laurel Mill Playhouse. She is a Senegalese-American actor, lawyer, and French, English, Spanish, Mediation, Negotiation, and Acting teacher. Some favorite credits include Frederick Shakespeare Festival: Queen & Bishop Carlisle in *Richard II*; Laurel Mill Playhouse (LMP): MISS EVERS in *Miss Evers' Boys*; Round House Theatre: ADENIKEH in *Nollywood Dreams* (HELEN HAYES nom); Dominion Stage: STOOL PIGEON in *King Hedley II* (2023 WATCH award); Chesapeake Shakespeare Co: HELENA in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; Best Medicine Rep: JO ANNE in *The Trip* (HELEN HAYES nom); LMP: CLARICE LYLE in *Consecrated Ground*; Silver Spring Stage: NORA in *A Doll's House Part II*; Sisters Freehold: Yinghe in *The Sleepover*. She gives her everything to her ancestors and maman. Youtube (Cestjackie): <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvd4LWK9h1msuj9oeFXHtng> | Instagram: @jy_artiste | Facebook: Jacqueline Elisabeth “La langue est un théâtre dont les mots sont les acteurs.”

Coming to Laurel Mill Playhouse

Romeo & Juliette

by William Shakespeare

Adapted & Directed by
Jacqueline Youm

Laurel Mill Playhouse

March 14 - April 6, 2025

Produced by Maureen Rogers



Laurel Mill Playhouse announces:

Directed by
Michael Hartsfield
Musically Directed
by Mimi
McGinniss
Produced by
Maureen Rogers

RENT

Show runs from April 25, 2025 through May 18, 2025 (10 performances)

AUDITIONS!

WHEN: Saturday, February 8, 2025 at 9:30am and Sunday, February 9, 2025 at 5:30pm. (Callbacks on Tuesday, February 11, 2025 at 7:00pm if necessary.)

WHERE: Laurel Mill Playhouse, 508 Main Street, Laurel, MD 20708.

WHAT: Prepare 32 bars from a modern Broadway show (approximately 1 minute).

Sides will be provided for cold readings from the script.

PRE-REGISTER AT <https://forms.gle/hnz49iq5JFx9LQ2d9>



QUESTIONS? Contact Maureen Rogers at lm508main@gmail.com or 301-617-9906

What's your Super Power?

Acting? Carpentry? Light Design? Sewing?



Volunteer NOW to help with our productions

Sign up on our website www.laurelmillplayhouse.org

Singing Opportunity for Women

Chesapeake Harmony Chorus loves to sing and invites you to visit a rehearsal. We are a women's singing group based in the greater **Annapolis MD**, area. We sing four-part acapella harmony in the barbershop style and are a chapter of **Sweet Adelines International**. We rehearse at Historic Baldwin Hall in Millersville, Md, every Wednesday night at 7:pm. For more information about visiting a rehearsal or joining the chorus, please contact us at **Membership1@ChesapeakeHarmony.org**.



LAUREL MILL PLAYHOUSE

508 Main Street, Laurel, MD 20707

Reservations - Visit us at: www.laurelmillplayhouse.org

OUR HISTORY

Burtonsville Players Inc., doing business as Laurel Mill Playhouse, is a non-profit, tax exempt (501c3) status, community theater group. Originally organized thirty five years ago as the Burtonsville Players Inc., Laurel Mill Playhouse recently bought and completely renovated a 100 year old building in the middle of historic Laurel, Maryland. This makes Laurel Mill Playhouse one of the few community theater organizations to own their own facility.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to provide the community with the opportunity to expand the cultural base of the quad-county area. We do this through theater arts, combining music, art, dance, youth, and senior activities.

Our group has the determination to provide space and resources to foster a creative environment.

Our encouragement of individuals to be challenged by new works and skills will lead to discovery and expansion of creative potential in the community.

Our goal is to provide training and initiate outreach opportunities within the counties we serve.

Board of Directors

Corporate Officers

Marvin Rogers – President

Larry Simmons – Vice-President

Diana Simmons – Secretary

Patrick Pase – Treasurer

Michael Hartsfield – Director

Lorraine Brooks – Director

Lori Bruun – Director

Marge McGugan – Costumes

**Maureen Rogers – Artistic Director
and Public Liaison**

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www.laurelmillplayhouse.org



**A proud member of WATCH AND AACT
and Laurel Board of Trade**